



# The Symbol of Methodism.



# THE SYMBOL — OF — METHODISM

*BEING*

AN INQUIRY INTO THE HISTORY, AUTHORITY,  
INCLUSIONS, AND USES OF THE  
TWENTY-FIVE ARTICLES

By H. M. DU BOSE, D.D.

*Confessedly great is the mystery of godliness:  
God was manifest in the flesh,  
Justified in the spirit,  
Seen of angels,  
Preached unto the Gentiles,  
Believed on in the world,  
Received up into glory.* —St. Paul.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY  
BISHOP E. E. HOSS, LL.D.

SMITH & LAMAR, AGENTS  
PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE M. E. CHURCH, SOUTH  
NASHVILLE, TENN., DALLAS, TEX.  
1907



**COPYRIGHT, 1907**  
**BY**  
**SMITH & LAMAR**

## PREFACE.

THE present treatise is not meant to be controversial; but the author is only frank in admitting that recent discussions and official actions which have seemed to call in question, and to some extent actually have called in question, the adequacy of the Confessional Articles of Methodism have been the occasion of its writing. The matters herein set forth, and the manner of their treatment, appear to me to be such as will contribute to a correct understanding of the present doctrinal situation in Methodism. Some seven and twenty to thirty years ago, in connection with the study of the "Conference Course" for young ministers and the Methodist "Standards," I read Bishop Burnet's "History of the English Reformation." It was then that there came to me a vision of the transcendent historical importance of Methodism as the successor and heir of the great intellectual and doctrinal movements of English and German Protestantism. From that day to this Methodism has seemed to me to be the sublimation of those spiritual and intellectual forces which began with the double revival of letters and religion. The initial effort as represented in the Lutheran movement was to recover the simple theology of apostolic times. Through several stages this

movement has advanced—chiefly through the articles written by Luther and Melancthon, and later adapted by Cranmer, and then by Archbishop Parker, and still later reduced and clarified by Wesley—until at last it holds the pledge of completion in Methodism. This pledge is being met by Methodism, not only in the maintenance of its own marvelous spiritual life and teaching, but also in its modification of the doctrinal system of almost every other Church of Christendom, especially those of the Calvinistic school. Methodism is therefore to be reckoned a child of Providence not alone in the matter of its spiritual ministry to all conditions of men, but also in the fact of its having been made the depository of that chastened formulary in which history and faith collaborated in a time when each sought to be free.

It is this belief in the historical fitness, confessional sufficiency, and prophetic destiny of the Twenty-Five Articles that has emboldened me to undertake a task which my own sense of lack, as well as of loyalty to the cause itself, has made me wish might have fallen to other hands. † Nevertheless, the work has been prosecuted with diligence and painstaking to know the truth, and in the conviction that the arguments are so abundant and self-assertive that even indifferent skill could not fail of putting them into effective setting.

As to how thoroughly I have met the possibilities

of this situation, I leave to the judgment of general Methodism, to which the cause of the Wesleyan Articles has been appealed.

I trust that the hope is not too ardent that, in addition to the use indicated above, this volume may be found to possess at least a modest permanent value as an interpretation of the teachings of the Articles. Outside of some works too bulky for ordinary handling, I know of no treatise of a like purpose now in print. I believe I correctly expound my motive when I say that the latter office, rather than the former, has been more constantly in my thought during the prosecution of this work.

H. M. DU BOSE.

NASHVILLE, TENN., April 23, 1907.



## CONTENTS.

---

CHAPTER I.		PAGE
CREED OR CONFESSION? .....		3
CHAPTER II.		
HISTORY AND SPIRIT. ....		27
CHAPTER III.		
AUTHORITY AND USE. ..		47
CHAPTER IV		
ORIGIN :		
I. The Doctrinal Articles... ..		69
CHAPTER V		
ORIGIN :		
II. The Anti-Romish Articles...		89
CHAPTER VI.		
DOCTRINAL INCLUSIONS.. ....		105
CHAPTER VII.		
GENERAL EXPOSITION :		
I. The Godhead, Christ, and the Holy Ghost.....		125
CHAPTER VIII.		
GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED) :		
II. The Holy Scriptures, Their Canonicity and Sufficiency .. ..		141
CHAPTER IX.		
GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED) :		
III. Sin and Free Will. ....		155

## CHAPTER X.

	PAGE
GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED) :	
IV Justification and Good Works. ..	173

## CHAPTER XI.

GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED) :	
V. The Church.. ..	185

## CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED) :	
VI. The Sacraments... ..	195

## CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONCLUDED) :	
VII. Christian Obligations. ....	205

## CHAPTER XIV

METHODISM AND CALVINISM.. ..	217
------------------------------	-----

## APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I. .. ..	235
APPENDIX II... ..	245

## INTRODUCTION.

Books are so plentiful nowadays that whoever writes a new one ought to be required to come into court and show cause. If that policy were pursued in the case of the volume at hand, it is altogether sure that the author could successfully meet the demand. The matters with which he deals are of prime importance; and the time is auspicious for dealing with them. When the assertion is boldly made that the doctrinal formularies of Methodism, under which it has achieved all its victories and made all its history, are antiquated and inadequate, and should be thoroughly rewritten in the current speech of to-day, the season has surely arrived for calm and honest discussion. Such discussion cannot fail to be profitable. If any man has light to give to the Church, let him come forward and display it.

J Dr. Du Bose has not written hastily, nor without wide and careful reading. Indeed, I much doubt whether there is another man in the Church who has taken so much pains to inform himself in regard to every phase of the subject. The fullness of his knowledge is matched also by the clearness and vigor of his English. He knows how to use his mother tongue so



as to convey the exact thought in his mind. Above all, he has the temper and spirit of a Christian. One may look through these pages to find a single trace of the *odium theologicum*. It is a real pleasure to commend the work of my well-beloved fellow-laborer, who never forgets, under any stress of circumstances, that he is a disciple of the Great Teacher.

E. E. HOSS.

NASHVILLE, TENN., May 3, 1907.

CREED OR CONFESSION?

The "Articles of Religion," together with the "established standards" of doctrine, make a system as complete as it is orthodox.—*Bishop Holland N. McTyeire.*

Mr. Wesley did one great thing for theology, which has never been fully appreciated, either in Europe or America. We allude to the Twenty-Four Articles of Religion which he provided for the use of his followers in this country. We have studied these Articles for more than forty years, not only in the works which have been written upon them, but also in the light of the holy Scriptures, and in the silent hours of our private meditations; and we are now firmly and confidently persuaded that they constitute the most perfect Confession of faith under the sun.—*Albert Taylor Bledsøe, LL.D.*

## CHAPTER I.

### *CREED OR CONFESSION.*

THEOLOGICAL controversy has tended to establish an important distinction between the creed of a Church and its confession. In harmony with this distinction, the creed may be defined as that which gives to the Church its catholic character, while the confession is that which, in one part or another, distinguishes it from the other Christian bodies. This definition finds full warrant in the earliest confessions of Protestantism, which are a logical, though unstudied, illustration of its principle.<sup>1</sup>

The divergence of the confession from the norm of the creed has increased at almost every stage of modern theological development. Some modern Churches, especially of the Calvinistic school, have seen their elaborate scholastic confessions honeycombed by the inroads of catholic and evangelical interpretations originating within their own bodies. The general drift, indeed, is away from the discursive statements of the sixteenth and seventeenth century

---

<sup>1</sup>Here a necessary distinction is to be remembered between articles of faith and articles of doctrine: the one are held necessary to salvation, the other are only believed to be true—that is, revealed in the Scriptures, which is a sufficient ground for esteeming them to be true.—*Bishop Burnet, on the Thirty-Nine Articles.*

type toward the credal simplicity of the earliest Christian ages. Bishop Burnet, writing in the seventeenth century of the great Protestant formularies of the preceding century, anticipated the sanest sentiment of the present day when he said: "It had been an invaluable blessing if the Christian religion had been kept in its original simplicity." In his work on the Thirty-Nine Articles he felt obliged to apologize for their theological range; and yet these Articles, with those of the Augsburg Confession, are the least diffuse of all the historical statements of Protestantism. The great Churchman's apology is in these words: "It may seem somewhat strange to see such a collection of tenets made the standard of the doctrines of a Church that is deservedly valued by reason of her moderation: this seems to be a departing from the simplicity of the first ages, which yet we pretend to set up for a pattern." Continuing, he says: "Since the Church of Rome owns all that is positive in our doctrines, there could be no discrimination made but by condemning the most important of those additions that they have brought into the Christian religion, in express words." This is the imperative in the confession as history has seen it develop. It is the answer to untruth.

The principle of which I have spoken as having been especially illustrated in the formularies of Protestantism had its roots in the primal record of the confession contained in the evangel. For physical background that record had the "coasts of Cesarea Philippi," but for historical antecedents, the ages of prophecy and Jewish controversy. For possible range the confession had the formularies and expanded sys-

tens of all the ancient and then extant rabbinical schools. But it ignored what to an adherent of the schools had been an opportunity, and fulfilled only the demands of personal faith. "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias, and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Here, indeed, is the norm of all true Churchly confessions, as also an indication of their rationale and inclusions. The situation plainly suggests the historical incentive as the warrant for the authoritative confession. The law governing the growing distinction between creeds and confessions is of great value to present-day faith. Its use is to light the way through present beclouding controversies and others lowering on the horizon of the age. The doctrinal statement that aspires to become effective and historic must answer to this law. Place for thought and faith-changing formularies is not made by the votes and resolutions of assemblies, but through the abundant and seasonable provisions of the time spirit. The *when* of an authoritative statement of doctrine is no more the simple choice of men, or schools of men, than is the substance of the doctrines to be stated. However unwilling and imperfect their submission, men must at last stand by and see history write itself.

If theology is a science, it is a correlate of history and partakes of its necessities and spirit. "I speak," says Professor James Orr, "of a parallel between the

theological system and the historical development of dogma, and of a logical law underlying both. The law is in both cases the same." There is, then, a theological system, as there has been, and still is, a historical development of dogma, to be considered. In a true sense these have been parallel, and, without doubt, one law underlies both—the law of cause and effect. Growth or change in the theological system brings nearer the day of the new dogmatic statement, so long as one shall be needed; but he is but an indifferent student of theological development who does not see that the dogmatic statement can come, and properly should come, only when theological thought and discussion have completed their cycle and culminated in dynamical manifestations. The recognition of this limiting principle of necessity is the only way to keep the confession from becoming a diffuse and overflowing manual of theological opinions.

A creed has in it the element of fixedness. It emanates from the inner life of the Church, but not wholly without influence from external occasions, as has sometimes been claimed. It consists of the verified and immutable elements of the confession that have suffered the final test and fulfilled their day of protest. It is a writing (though as for that, much of the Church's creed is often unwritten) whose terms have been chastened to the last limit of compression and adaptability, and into which have gone the souls of the confessors. It is a formula suited to use inside the Church, as in the instruction of catechumens, in baptismal dedication, and in obligating Church members. It serves also as a ready answer to inquiring

interest. The confession is, on the other hand, the Church's answer to heretical departures and innovations which have become overt in the body of Christianity. "The natural heresies in Christianity," says Schleiermacher, "are the Docetic, the Nazaraic, the Manichæan, and the Pelagian." These were the occasions of those historic polemical writings in the early Church which go under the names of symbols and apologies. They produced the necessity for declaratory statements, to which other controversies added, and to which others sufficiently momentous and crucial may yet contribute. This was the necessity which forced a Confession from the first defenders of the faith of Protestantism. It is the only proper provocative of such a writing.

The plain logic of what we have thus discovered is that, while the creed of the Church—"a brief compendium of the objects of our Christian faith"<sup>2</sup>—is an enduring formula, the confession is a writing whose use is confined to an age or a cycle of thought. When any one protest or contention of the confession ceases to have force or pertinency, by reason of the disappearance of the abuse or false doctrine covered by it, it is eliminated, or else ceases to be regarded, and the question goes back to the realm of things privately interpreted. This rightly fixes upon every confession and dogmatic statement the limitations which naturally belong to human thinking. The confessions of Christendom are thus to become expressive of true theological progress through a process of elimination

---

<sup>2</sup>"An Exposition of the Creed," Pearson.



rather than by wholesale additions to their tenets, or the picking up of supposed theological drop-stitches.

The Church has already had wholesome illustrations of the possibility of statement-making by elimination. Three entire articles of the Edwardine Confession were omitted by Archbishop Parker and his associates in making up the draft of the Elizabethan or Thirty-Nine Articles. The historian assures us that these tenets having been directed against extravagances of the Anabaptists which had disappeared in the meantime, their presence in the Confession was no longer pertinent.<sup>3</sup> The Thirty-Nine Articles were in their turn shorn of their history-worn elements by American Methodists, Mr. Wesley being the mover of their vote. This recension was the appropriate sign not only of the rising of a new ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but of the empowerment of a new spirit in theology. The chastened and abridged Anglican Confession exactly expounded that spirit by so much as Methodism is the historical successor of Anglicanism. The Reformed Episcopal Church followed, in a similar recension, the example of its elder American sister. The Protestant Episcopal Church was near doing the same thing at its beginning, in 1785. Bishop Williams, the American editor of Bishop Browne's work on the Thirty-Nine Articles, recites in a footnote appended to that volume the details of this interesting history. The Convocation called to organize the Church was about adopting a series of twenty articles, which it is understood were in effect an abridgment of the Thirty-Nine

---

<sup>3</sup>See Schaff on these Articles.

Articles. Bishop Seabury "doubted of the need of articles at all." Others appear to have thought with him, and there was much delay. An effort was then made to write a statement out of hand to supplement, or supply, the supposed lacks of the old. The plan was abandoned only after "the impossibility of agreement in a new form was shown," and after "the inherent folly of the proposition was exhibited."

Current history, in the matter of the "Articles of Religion" prepared by the Joint Commission for the Methodist Church in Japan, which is to be organized in May, 1907, illustrates our point of contention. The historical preamble to the Articles says: "The Nippon Methodist Kyokwai shall be permanently founded on the fundamental doctrines of Holy Scripture, as unfolded by Christ and his apostles, formally stated in the 'Articles of Religion'<sup>4</sup> embodied in this plan of organization," etc. These "Articles of Religion" are eighteen in number, and are a recension of the Twenty-Five Articles, adding no new doctrinal statement and eliminating no matter of importance. In fact, the Confession is the Twenty-Five Articles abridged. Very many of the Articles are, with the slightest verbal changes, the same. Elsewhere there are substitutions of terms and phrases. One Article only is entirely eliminated — the one on the use of "an unknown tongue" in the services of the Church. Several others are combined, in one case three Articles combining to make a single one. The reference to original sin, or guilt, is omitted from Articles II. and VII., but the

---

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix, II.

title of original sin<sup>5</sup> is retained for the Japanese Article, also numbered VII. This tenet says that "Christ died for the sins of the whole world." In the Article on the Church the spirit of the ritual for the reception of members is added in these words, "And whose mission is to evangelize the world in obedience to our Lord's command," which is well, particularly in the Confession of a Church newly organized in a heathen land; but it is a truth that was never in dispute, and is written in large letters on every page of modern Christian literature.

The organization of the Methodist Church of Japan is an event of tremendous moment; and had there been felt a need for it, the movement might have been signalized by the promulgation of new formulas, or at least by the addition of a number of new titles showing doctrines not catalogued in the "mother symbol." But not a new dogma is proposed; not even a new title is added, but on the contrary a half dozen disappear. The teaching of the Nipponese Confession is that of the Twenty-Five Articles. It is not a new formulary, nor a restatement, but a technical recension.

As religious thought broadens, the necessity for the historical confession grows measurably less. It is an expedient of Christianity in the days of its distress, and should be rigidly confined to those exceptional matters of difference which history plainly indicates as being the proper elements of such a formulary. "The Christian religion is greater than any possible

---

<sup>5</sup>See Chapter IX., page 156.

interpretation of it," says Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall. "The whole conception of orthodoxy, as meaning conformity to a standard drawn up by authority and officially adopted as the touchstone of belief, no longer satisfies the most spiritual minds, who desire only to know and utter the truth as that truth is revealed in Holy Scripture and certified inwardly to the believer through the witness of Christian experience."<sup>8</sup> The polemical confession must finally disappear and the apostolic theology be fully recovered. There will then remain but the simple historic creed, the catechism, the homily—which is to-day the normal medium of statement, as the epistle was at the beginning—and the ripened heritage of private interpretation. We need no mentor to instruct us that these observations reach into the realm of the speculative and ideal. Theology is still in its practical stages, and all its surroundings are real. The historic confession has an age and an empire yet before it, but this empire is to embody historical sequences and not yield to empirical exploitations and speculations.

It may be asked: "How, when ascertained, is theological truth to be established, if not in authoritative statements that register the discovery or settlement of each of its contents?" How have the sciences made effective their discoveries and verifications? Not through conventions, nor through the authoritative statements of academies and schools, but through the general conclusions of mankind. Some things in science we know to be settled. These constitute a creed

---

<sup>8</sup>"Recovery of the Apostolic Theology." (Cole Lectures.)

upon which there is no division. Other things in science are being settled daily, but there is no arrangement, as there is no need, to have the facts reduced to authoritative statements by commissions and academies. Human intuitions and faith receive and verify whatever can make an effective claim. Belief is stronger than any form of authority. It is in a convinced public judgment and a justified public faith that science goes to record with its claims and discoveries. By so much as theology is a science, and much more than a science, it can trust to a record in human faith, and learn at the earliest possible moment to dispense with the terms of a dogmatic statement.

When there existed but one type of Christianity, as was practically the case during the first four centuries, the symbols of faith took the form of short and simple declarations. But these were themselves, as we have seen, protests against the active forms of paganism, or else against the teachings of heretics and innovators here and there. There would no doubt have been creed forms in the Church had there been no controversies; but no forms can be conceived of that had not been the result of intellectual crises, or other extraordinary causes. Inquiry into such an hypothetical situation would be profitless. We deal with historic facts. The statements made during the earlier centuries became, by reason of their inclusions and exclusions, precedents for the confessions of later ages. In defining such a doctrinal statement as is allowable under the historic precedent Dr. Philip Schaff says: "It is always the result of dogmatic con-

troversy, and more or less directly polemical against opposing error. Each symbol bears the impress of its age and the historical situation out of which it arose." Dr. Thomas O. Summers, to whom the distinction had no controversial value, describes the Confession as "a formulary more extended and developed than the creed." He also adds that efforts have been made to "improve the Confession by both omissions and additions, but the experiments are not encouraging.<sup>7</sup> The Confession is for the use of ministers and teachers as a standard of public doctrine where public test has become necessary. This principle is of supreme value in determining what is to go into a confession or statement, as well as of the need of such writing at all. By this principle we propose to try the Articles of Methodism, and by it they must be tried in the arena of practical theology. These Articles have coexisted, unchallenged, with organized Methodism since the beginning. They are destined to stand in their present relation until the cycle to which they belong is completed.

Methodism is an interpretation of the life of Protestantism, while the Twenty-Five Articles, as being the historical disenthralment of the Anglican and the Augsburg Confessions, are the final symbol of Protestantism. Successors to these Articles, if such there are to be, will mark the practical consummation of the Reformation, and the extinction, or else permanent decline, of those intransigent errors and false theologies, principally papalistic, that provoked their writ-

---

<sup>7</sup>See Summers's "Systematic Theology."

ing. Other Churchly statements have contributed to the completion of Protestant ideals, but the two historic formularies from which our Articles are descended are the chief pillars of the recovered doctrines and prophecies of the gospel. There was meant to be a subtle doctrinal distinction between the term "Reformed" as appropriated by the Calvinistic Churches of the Continent and that of "Protestant" as left to the Lutheran and Anglican bodies. The distinction is far more than doctrinal: it is historic, prophetic. The two great Protestant Confessions with a court-like writ put the spirit of Rome in the stocks until "the thousand years" of its intransigence should be past: but the expanded scholastic statements of Calvinism, made under the policing protection of German and English Protestantism, abound with the subtleties of a theology which history has been shut up to the necessity of describing as "Reformed." Though the Calvinistic doctors espoused the cause, they missed, in their zeal for doctrinal abstractions, the first great point of Protestantism. That point subsists permanently with the anti-papal sections of our Twenty-Five Articles. It is worthy of note, and becomes a pertinent record in this connection, that with all the excisions and recensions practiced upon the English Articles since the first draft made of them, in the time of Edward VI., to the abridgment made less than forty years ago by the Reformed Episcopal Church, not a single one of the important anti-Romish tenets has disappeared,<sup>8</sup> nor has

---

<sup>8</sup>By consulting the draft of the Articles prepared for the Japanese Methodist Church this observation will be found to

one of them lost its historical force. They cannot pass until the measure of their demands be realized. That demand is the perfect enthronement of the doctrines of the priesthood of believers, justification by faith alone, access of the individual to the person of Christ, the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith, and the Church as "a congregation of faithful men." Protestantism did not take its rise in a mere criticism of doctrines, though that was the occasion of its first sign of struggle. It sprang out of the soul of the Erfurt monk who, in hunger of heart, continually cried to himself: "O when wilt thou become holy and fit to obtain the grace of God?" This passion quickly upon its utterance became the passion of a nation, to the satisfying of which the hierarchy of Rome was found to be the one obstacle. Hence the deathless words of protest.

In its more modern use the term *confession* is of Protestant origin. The German and Anglican Articles—the preëminent types—follow the ancient axiom of inclusions. They are thus found built up as historical protests against heresies and abuses that had gained ascendancy in the Christian body. The logical inclusions of future confessions are to be determined by these precedents. The elements to be excluded are those which have not entered into dispute, or, if ever so entering, have passed out of it, or else have so spent their force as to be no longer of historical or polemical moment; as, for instance, the anti-Anabaptis-

---

apply to them also. No important anti-papal protest has been omitted.



tic Articles of the Edwardine Confession, of which more is to be said later.

The distinguished Creed critic quoted above<sup>9</sup> notes a tendency among modern Churches to diminish rather than multiply the number of their Articles, and in any new statement to imitate the simplicity of the Apostles' Creed. The opposite tendency is a sign of reaction, the persistence of theological empiricism, or else the result of an immature conception of what a confession is, both as to its fundamentals and uses. This critic, although himself a Calvinist and a dogmatist, indicts many of the Reformed Confessions for having transgressed the historic rule, and by their unwarranted inclusions having far exceeded the allowable limit. "It was," he remarks, "a sad mistake and a source of incalculable mischief to incorporate the results of every doctrinal controversy with the Confession of Faith, and to bind lengthy discussions with all their metaphysical distinctions and subtleties upon the conscience of every minister and teacher. *There is a vast difference between theological opinions and articles of faith.*"

Statements of doctrines that have been written in exceptional times, as a very necessity of the life of religious faith and liberty, are strong in naked and elemental truth, while those that have emerged out of hand in the dull days of theological empiricism have overflowed with "metaphysical distinctions and subtleties." In this, history admonishes.

It is not to be denied that in the great typical Prot-

---

<sup>9</sup>Dr. Schaff.

estant statements certain unnecessitated doctrinal elements have entered; but they are supplemental, and were introduced as being necessary to the proper setting of those for which the Confession was undertaken. Brief formularies of the uncontested catholic Creeds also uniformly enter; but these are used as a standing ground, or first principle of justification, for protest. Melancthon made this plain in the initial member, or preamble, of those Articles submitted to Charles V and his Diet at Augsburg. The presence in the Confession of the catholic formulary and of a complementing statement here and there is not to become a precedent for multiplying doctrinal tenets, or even attempting to make them into a systematic theology. Whatever else the historical confession may be interpreted to be, it is not an *ordo salutis*, it is not a systematic theology. It is what the ruder militant side of theology makes it, and not what the meditative, scholastic inwardness of theology might wish to see it. The catholic Articles of the Augsburg Confession constitute the permanent element in every Protestant formulary. They belong to the creed, written or unwritten, which the centuries of history have differentiated from the confession. They constitute the hope and pledge of Christian unity, a unity which is to come not as the result of sentimental fondness but as a militant conquest.

Methodism is settled in the apostolic theology. The Apostles' Creed—the *Symbolum Apostolorum*—is its Creed. This gives it the succession, for although the claim that this formulary was derived directly from the apostles is unsupported, it is the survival of apos-

tolic forms of expression and confession. The "articles of the Christian faith," which in the office of infant baptism are enjoined to be taught the child by parents or sponsors, are no other than this Apostles' Creed. This is made plain by referring to the office for the baptism of adults, where the text of the Apostles' Creed is categorically enjoined as the condition of adult baptism. Acceptance of this Creed is the one condition of belief required of those who seek membership in the Methodist Church. The vow of membership but ratifies and confirms "the promise and vow of repentance, faith, and obedience contained in the baptismal covenant." Of ministers, in both the offices of elder and deacon, unfeigned faith in the canonical Scriptures only is required as the credal condition of ordination. From this it is plain that the "canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament" (of which the Apostles' Creed is accepted as a brief summary) are the final and binding creed of Methodism for all its orders, lay and clerical. This is the acme of theological and evangelical freedom.

But in addition to the Apostles' Creed, Methodism has a Confession of Faith, or a statement of doctrines, called the "Articles of Religion." These are twenty-five in number, and are usually spoken of as the "Twenty-Five Articles." There are also certain standard books of doctrine which have authority as expositions of the Scripture teachings of salvation. There exists some difference of opinion as to how many of these books there are, but all agree that a certain fifty-two sermons of John Wesley and his "Notes on the New Testament" are to be included. These books have an

indicatory doctrinal value which is commonly esteemed to be second only to that of the Twenty-Five Articles. These books alone are the standards of the Wesleyan Connection, which has no articles of confession whatsoever.

But neither here nor in the Wesleyan Church in England are the Wesleyan books regarded in the light of a technical statement. They are accepted as authoritative homilies on the essential doctrines of Christianity, and as glossaries and guides in the study of Scripture. The polemical element is not wholly wanting in them; but the spirit of teaching is ascendant. They differ from the regulation homilies, forms of concord, catechisms, compends, etc., of other Churches in this, that they were not prepared to supplement or cure the defects of the Confession. Their use in Methodism is to exemplify its life and experience. They cannot be made an excuse either for extending the limits of our present Confession or for entering upon other and newer enterprises of a like nature. The standard books are the interpretation of Wesleyanism as a distinct expression of Christianity. They expound the doctrines essential to Methodism as the last developed—and, as we believe, the highest—type of evangelical Christianity. In the nature of the case, these books are to remain as a permanent doctrinal content of Methodism until it is historically evolved into some higher form of evangelical experience and testimony. There can be no return to sixteenth century dogmatism or ritualism.

The reduction of the doctrinal teachings of the standard books of Methodism to a syllabus, or com-

pendium, with the authority of a catechism or teaching manual, as a detail of Church evangelism might well commend itself to any of the Methodist bodies. But such a step would be far removed from either the field or the significance of a confession of faith, or even a technical statement of doctrines. The document when promulgated would carry none of the importance of a formulary; but would exist simply as a medium of interpretation, which interpretation might be made to answer to new and better forms without crucial or conventional tests. Such interpretations are no more than the orderly development found in current books of opinion on theological and scriptural subjects.

The view herein taken of the creed and confession does not in any way controvert or obstruct the principle of theological development, nor of progressive statements of doctrine. It recognizes and conserves them. It contends for the development of theology through its proper media—the text-book, the homily, the catechism, and the working syllabus or compendium. It also contends that the authoritative ecumenical confession, or statement, can come only when history has unmade its predecessor, and given notice of the fact in the breaking of seals or the detonation of thunders. Imitation or pseudo confessions may be formulated, as indeed has often been done; but they must become a sport, and not a content, of history. The Reformed Churches, as distinguished from the Lutheran and Anglican bodies, uttered no fewer than thirty Confessions during a century, but only one of them is to be named to-day along with the formularies

of the latter two. Dr. Schaff remarks rather sadly upon the fact that these Reformed writings are now little better than reminiscences.

The Wesleyan Methodist Church in England has itself furnished an example of the inevitably abortive extra-historical effort at statement-making. The Conference held at Leeds, in 1806, appointed Dr. Adam Clarke, Mr. Joseph Benson, and Dr. Thomas Coke "to draw up a Digest or Form, expressive of the Methodist doctrine." These were names to conjure with! Dr. Coke, not being able to meet with the other members of the small committee, made an independent draft. Dr. Clarke and Mr. Benson also made a draft. Both these Digests have been printed by the Wesley Historical Society, London, and through the courtesy of Dr. Collins Denny, of Vanderbilt University, the publication is before me.<sup>10</sup> These Digests—one of them certainly, and both as it is believed—were "sent to the chairmen of each district, when the several districts took the various Articles into serious consideration." But though this was done, the Digests never reached the Conference in any official way, or if so, were never acted upon. Mr. Benson, in an issue of the *Methodist Magazine*, in 1807, says that these *Articles of Religion*, as he then styled the document, or documents, were not considered by the Conference because of a multitude of weighty matters," and "a press of business." That, no doubt, was accepted by Mr. Benson as the real reason for nonaction, but to anybody who

---

<sup>10</sup>See an Article by Dr. Denny on this subject in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* (Nashville), for April, 1907.

reads these Digests to-day another reason will appear, and one accentuated by the history of exactly one hundred years.

Evidently the framers of these Digests understood that they were to have respect to the Twenty-Five Articles of Wesley. But Dr. Coke's Articles were expanded to the number of Twenty-Nine. They contain very much that is in the Twenty-Five Articles, but also very much that is *not* in them; and it was no doubt that which was taken from without that gave them their quietus. Amongst other things, the great Doctor must needs bring in the "five points" of Calvinism, *contra*, of course, and for this there was a show of excuse in *his* day. And what with particular statements on the doctrines of "The Witness of the Spirit" and "Perfect Love" he produced a document that might well bring a twentieth century enterprise of similar purpose to despair. But it availed nothing, except to feed the cobweb looms of the archives. The Digest credited to Clarke and Benson is still more diffuse, containing thirty-eight Articles, all generously phrased. It reveals a modicum of the matter contained in the Twenty-Five Articles, but overflows with outside theological generalities. It also encompasses the "quinquarticulars." Of necessity it shared the fate of the other Digest. Wesleyan Methodism had "weightier matters" before it. Great as were these men—and there have not arisen greater amongst us—they could not do that for which there existed no historical warrant. Had Wesleyan Methodism adopted these Articles (one set or the other), it had been hampered and embarrassed through all its after history. The au-

thor of the pamphlet from which I have gleaned these facts says: "It is perhaps not unwise that no subsequent attempt has been made officially to cast the doctrines of Methodism into such a form."

The reason why the diffuse and arbitrary Confession has failed to make historical connection is not far to seek. It is in the nature of things. Confessions, like constitutions, are the results of revolutions. To be sure, these revolutions may be purely intellectual; but if so, they will be marked by a ripening and fullness of thought-issues, and attested by an explosive-ness that will take the stead of war. Moreover, dogmas in an age of freedom of thought are like cathedrals in an age of freedom of worship, anachronistic. What has already been created, if answering to law, faith, or the inner sense, is very well, and can never lack for reverence; but there will be reluctance to enter upon such enterprises again. The world has had its teachers; it is now concerned to work out its lessons to their uttermost syllables.





# HISTORY AND SPIRIT

In 1501 a young student at Erfurt found a Bible. Here Methodism began. Not the name of it, but the thing itself.—*Bishop David S. Doggett.*

One has also to take a definite position concerning the relation of history to the materials of belief.—*Clarence A. Beckwith, "Realities of Christian Theology."*

Methodism is not primarily a doctrinal system or a mode of life, but a moral and spiritual force that has wrought mightily during the last sixteen decades of human history. Springing forth from the established Church of England, it simply but strongly asserted its primitive and apostolic character as a renewal of Christianity.—*Bishop John F. Hurst.*

The Methodist Bishops were the first Protestant bishops, and Methodism the first Protestant Episcopal Church in the New World; and as Wesley had given it the Anglican Articles (omitting the seventeenth on Predestination), and the Liturgy wisely abridged, it became, both by its precedent of organization and its subsequent numerical importance, the real successor of the Anglican Church in America.—*Abel Stevens, LL.D.*

## CHAPTER II.

### *HISTORY AND SPIRIT*

WITH a single exception the Twenty-Five Articles are older by two centuries than organized Methodism. They import into its theology the symbols of catholic Christianity and the Confessions of Protestantism in the years of its making. Their claims to veneration inhere in the sound and scriptural character of their contents and in the record of their long and honorable descent. They are apostolic; they are Nicene and Athanasian; in form and spirit, they closely follow the Augsburg Confession—the great militant voice of sixteenth century Protestantism—and through their immediate original, the Thirty-Nine Articles, they flow with the noblest life and thought of the English Reformation. The Wesleyan recension left them all but perfect for the uses they have served and are to serve as the symbol of Methodism.

Attention has been called to an apparent inconsistency in Mr. Wesley's churchmanship which assigned dogmatic Articles to the Methodist body in America, while the Methodism of England was left without a formal Confession.<sup>1</sup> There need be no difficulty in

---

<sup>1</sup>"In this country those Twenty-Five Articles have never been adopted as authoritative, and the vast majority of Methodists here hardly know of their existence. But the Notes and Fifty-Three Sermons of Wesley are named in all our

reconciling these acts. The American Articles hold with the establishment of the Episcopacy in America, while the Connection in England was left to a presbyterial administration.

Mr. Wesley was an Anglican, and had faith in the historic unity of English Protestantism. In his view the Thirty-Nine Articles met in England the confessional need of the Protestant cause, as the long-established religious character of the people "called Methodists" in the motherland put them beyond the need of the authority of the episcopal office. In America the case was different, every condition being formative. By unmistakable tokens also the Methodist Church was to take to the Protestantism of the New World substantially the same relation that the Church of Cranmer had sustained for two centuries to the Protestantism of England. It was to become in the West the exponent of the Reformation derived by way of the Augsburg and Anglican Confessions. The Articles and the Episcopacy which stand equally upon the high ground of expediency fell to American Methodism as its birthright and its pledge of obligation. Bold as he was in all needful enterprises, Wesley would never have undertaken to formulate a Confes-

---

trust-deeds as containing the recognized standard of doctrine to be observed by our ministers and maintained by the trustees of our chapels. No statement of faith prepared by our own or any 'Ecumenical' Conference could have any legal force or validity, though as a historical document it might possess both interest and value." (Dr. W. T. Davison, Ex-President British Wesleyan Conference, in *Methodist Recorder*, January, 1907.)

sion out of hand, but historical and theological necessity impelled him to give to the Church in America the chastened maximum of that statement which had been made in the fiery exigencies that gave Protestantism to the world.<sup>2</sup> Those things which come of crucial times and world-dividing contests are not to be lightly set aside. Like the ark of the covenant, they become a condition of victory and a guarantee of peace. The Twenty-Five Articles are American Methodism's message to the future, the instrument by which she is to maintain her Protestant vantage and win her yet great Churchly victories.

A careful study of the history and contents of the Articles of Methodism will help to enlarge the theological vision, develop a catholic sympathy, increase reverence for the greatness and wisdom of the past, and furnish the student with effective arguments against present and future novelties in statement-making. It will show a series of tenets in which there is a minimum of dogmatism with a maximum of historical and self-proven statements—a document free from abstrusities and the nice descantings under which a multitude of so-called creeds have broken down. This study will comprehensively show that the Arti-

---

<sup>2</sup>“The theology of American Methodism is essentially that of the Anglican Church in all things which according to that Church and the general consent of Christianity are necessary to theological orthodoxy or the doctrines of grace, unless the entire omission of the historically equivocal Seventeenth Article on ‘Predestination and Election’ be considered an exception.” (Stevens’s “History of Methodism,” Vol. II., page 206.)

cles are one of the chief authentications of the mission of Methodism. Fortunately the history is in no case involved or doubtful. Comparatively new light, too, has been thrown upon it, adding to the certitude of evidence in no wise insufficient, and making more certain paths already plain.

The year 1517 begins the history of Protestantism. It was in that year that Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenburg, and thus brought on a contest which within a dozen years leavened all Germany with his doctrines. The Emperor, Charles V., placed him under ban as a heretic, and labored fruitlessly to bring him to terms. Being supported by the secular princes, and much more by his faith in God, Luther defied both Rome and the Emperor. Charles at length awoke to the realization that it was not Luther but the German people with whom he must deal. He accordingly, in 1530, convened a Diet of the Empire at Augsburg, a German city, and invited the Reformers to submit to it "a statement of their grievances and opinions relating to the faith."

June 25, 1530, is a memorable day in the history of mankind. On that day what is known as the Augsburg Confession was read before the Diet of the Empire. Dr. Christian Bayer, the Chancellor of Saxony, was the reader, and the chronicle tells us that the reading was done in a voice so distinct that it was heard not only by the members of the Diet, but also by a vast multitude of people assembled without. Two copies of the writing had been made, one in German, another in Latin. The papal delegates desired that

the Latin copy be used, but history inexorably ordained its reading from the German, the language of the common people.

This famous Confession—"the mother symbol of Protestantism"—was first drafted by Martin Luther in seventeen sections, known as the Torgau Articles from the place at which they were written; but being under ban, Luther could not bear them to the seat of the Diet. The Torgau Articles were therefore committed to the hands of Melancthon, Luther's learned coadjutor, who, before presenting them to the Diet, expanded them into twenty-eight altogether—twenty-one of which stated the doctrinal views of the Reformers, the remaining seven being a series of protests against particular abuses and corruptions introduced into the Church by the papacy. "This Confession was prepared," says the capable editor of Bishop Burnet's work, "for the twofold purpose of rebutting the slanders of the papists and of publishing to Europe the doctrines of the Reformers." In it is seen the germ of every Protestant confession in the world. In it is particularly seen the genesis of our own Articles from which, through the Anglican Articles, they are admittedly, in the main, derived.

The German Confessors expressly claimed to plant themselves in their doctrinal statements on the language of the oldest symbols of the Church. New terms were not sought after. On the contrary, their purpose was to recover the old, so they sounded out a challenge to return to those things which had been approved. The opening declaration of the Augsburg Confession is in this spirit: "Our Churches with one



accord teach that the decree of the council of Nicea concerning the unity of the Divine essence and concerning the three Persons (of the Trinity) is true and ought to be confidently believed." The correctness of this claim of the Reformers to catholic soundness was not disallowed by the papal critics of the Confession in the *Refutation* which they submitted to the Diet. It was only on the points that ran counter to the decrees and usages of Rome that they asked for anathemas against the Confessors. An examination of the Nicene and anti-Nicene symbols, beginning with the Creed of St. Irenæus, will show the student how both the Augsburg and the Anglican Articles borrow the language, as the sense, of the old and undisputed formularies. The value of these facts in determining what a statement of doctrines should be has already been considered. We are now to trace the relations of these facts through the whole cycle of Protestant symbol-writing.

It is worthy of note, as explaining why Melancthon so considerably expanded the draft of Luther's Torgau Articles, that when the Reformers reached Augsburg they found in circulation a pamphlet by John Eck, the old-time antagonist of Luther, consisting of four hundred and four theses against the doctrines and demands of the Reformers. The wily polemic had grossly exaggerated the views of his antagonists. But the overtowering scholarship of Melancthon and his mastery of the new Greek learning made him more than a match for the scholastic papist. The Augsburg document is a monument to his genius, as also a testimony to his unwavering courage and devout

spirit. The history is another link in the argument establishing the fitness and sufficiency of our Methodist Articles. It is historically clear that they had their maternity in theological necessity

A list of the chief Article headings of the Augsburg Confession will show how closely they were followed by the compilers of the Anglican Articles, and consequently how they have been inherited by the Articles of Methodism. The numbers and titles of the more important tenets submitted by Melancthon to the Diet of Augsburg are as follows: I. "Of God;" II. "Of Natural Depravity;" III. "Of the Son of God and His Mediatorial Work;" IV. "Of Justification;" VII. "Of the Church;" IX. "Of Baptism;" X. "Of the Lord's Supper;" XI. "Of Confession;" XII. "Of Repentance;" XIII. "Of the Use of the Sacraments;" XV. "Of Religious Ceremonies;" XVI. "Of Political Affairs;" XVIII. "Of Free Will;" XX. "Of Good Works;" XXI. "Of the Invocation of Saints;" XXII. "Of Communion in One Kind;" XXIII. "Of the Celibacy of the Priests;" XXIV. "Of the Mass;" XXV. "Of Confession;" etc.

It is a well-established historical fact that from a period almost immediately following the Diet of Augsburg close relations subsisted between the English and German Reformers. The full significance of the relationship has been pointed out by Archdeacon Hardwick in his "History of the Thirty-Nine Articles." The Protestant era began in England with the accession to power of Cranmer, in 1529, one year before the Diet of Augsburg. In 1531 Henry was declared official head of the Church of England. In that year

the Smalkaldic League, a compact of German Protestant princes, was formed to resist the execution of the imperial edicts against the Reformers. Henry was several times on the point of joining this League, urged by many of his counselors to do so. He earnestly importuned the German authorities to send Melancthon, his favorite scholar, over to England to assist in reforming the Church. But Melancthon could not be spared from Germany. As a final overture Henry dispatched a company of his own theologians, headed by Bishop Fox, to the Continent to confer with the Smalkaldic princes and the Lutheran divines. This delegation spent no little time in conference with Melancthon and others, and it appears that the Augsburg Articles were found, in the main, to be acceptable to the Englishmen. It has even been asserted that certain writings were entered upon looking to a confessional union. But Henry did not fully know his own mind—in fact, was not yet fully committed to the Reformation—and the whole scheme of union failed. Later, however, when Henry felt more deeply the need of German sympathy, he solicited the Lutherans to send a delegation to England to renew the negotiations.

The most distinguished member of the Lutheran embassy to England was Frederick Myconius, next to Melancthon Luther's most trusted and capable assistant. To consult with this embassy Henry appointed a committee of English scholars—bishops and doctors—who with their German colleagues are referred to as "Orators." It appears that these commissioners could also have easily agreed on the Augsburg Articles, in the main; but Henry's accustomed vacilla-

tions and his distrust of the continental princes, as well as his personal ambitions, caused the work of the Orators to come to naught, at least for the time. It is, however, now known that the commissioners reached a joint understanding concerning a list of articles—thirteen in number—which were written down in Latin. These articles represented the first stage of the negotiations. For the reasons given in the case of the former *entente*—namely, Henry's lack of conviction and constancy—the negotiations proceeded no farther, and the Articles were not then even made public. Instead, Henry caused to be written, or, as some say, himself wrote, certain six canons or statutes—sometimes referred to as “the bloody statutes of the Six Articles,” because of their rigorous demands—which the troubled Church of England was forced to accept during the remainder of his reign.

The Thirteen Articles—those compiled by the joint Commission of German and English Orators—were almost literal extracts from the Augsburg Confession. They appear to have fallen into the hands of Archbishop Cranmer, having probably been delivered to him by Myconius, in 1538, on the departure of the German Commissioners to their home. A prophetic foresight no doubt influenced the Primate to preserve them for a future exigency. That exigency arose when, after the death of Henry, Edward VI. of happy memory came to the throne. This is the history of the relations borne to the Thirty-Nine Articles and our own by these cryptic Articles of the Orators: Twenty-one years after the Diet of Augsburg and five years after the death of Luther—that is to say, in 1551

—a commission of bishops and others was appointed by royal decree to draw up a Confession of faith for the Church of England. The most prominent members of this Commission were Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury and Primate of England, Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, and Peter Martyr, or Pietro Vermigli, an illustrious Italian refugee to Protestantism.

It has always been understood that the work of writing the Edwardine Articles was done chiefly by Cranmer and Ridley. The King was a youth of devout and noble sentiments and bodily devoted to the cause of the Reformation. Moreover, the royal will in matters of religion was expressed by and through the great Archbishop. The characterization of Cranmer by Macaulay as "the man who took the chief part in settling the alliance which produced the Anglican Church" had therefore every historical opportunity to be true. The most widely accepted formulary of Protestantism came from under his hand. The Augsburg Confession, which became the basis and the inspiration of his formulary, undoubtedly secured its main entrance by way of the before-mentioned Thirteen Articles of the Orators.

As we have seen, the Augsburg Articles were in favor with the English Churchmen from the beginning. Archbishop Cranmer early accepted the views of Luther, even his doctrine of the eucharist; but long before he had set his hands to make a Confession for England he had not only rejected the view that the sacraments "confer grace" (*ex opere operato*), but had given to Protestantism the scriptural doctrine of

the spiritual presence which is the doctrine of the Eighteenth Article of our own Confession. Cranmer's finally perfected view of the Lord's Supper is the great dividing point between the Augsburg Confession and the Thirty-Nine Articles. This was a history-given office in which the Anglican formulary became the corrector of the "mother symbol of Protestantism." The chief mission of Protestantism was, and is, the vindication of the doctrine of the sufficient sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ and its expounding sacrament, the Lord's Supper. The corruptions of Rome grew out of the degradation of this sacrament. The formula of Cranmer is, as we believe, the ultimate statement of the doctrine of the eucharist. There is certainly no middle ground between it and the views of the Reformed theologians of Zurich and Geneva. His doctrine of the sacramental character of the Supper, and his complete rejection of the doctrine of the physical presence in any form or to any degree, separated him at the point of supreme test from both the Reformed and the Lutheran theologians.

The Edwardine Articles, as completed by Cranmer, were forty-two in number. They were in all essential points the same as the Thirty-Nine Articles held by the Church of England to-day. Their identity or close agreement at so many points with the Augsburg Articles was largely unexplained to English Church historians until the Thirteen Articles were discovered in their original Latin text. This discovery was made by Dr. Jenkyns, a writer of the last century, while searching amongst the papers of the great Primate. The text of these Thirteen Articles is a

living link between Anglican and Lutheran Protestantism. The Thirteen titles are equally a testimony to the relationship. They are: (1) "Of One God and the Persons of the Trinity;" (2) "Of Original Sin;" (3) "Of the Two Natures of Christ;" (4) "Of Justification;" (5) "Of the Church;" (6) "Of Baptism;" (7) "Of the Lord's Supper;" (8) "Of Repentance;" (9) "Of the Use of the Sacraments;" (10) "Of the Ministers of the Church;" (11) "Of Church Rites;" (12) "Of Civil Rule;" (13) "Of the Resurrection and the Final Judgment."

It may easily be seen how nearly these titles coincide with an equal number in the Confession of Methodism.

In another chapter I am to show how much of the language of these and other Articles tributary to, or borrowed from, the Augsburg Confession is to be found in our Articles.

Before the Edwardine Articles had been fairly published, the youthful monarch, after whom they will ever be called, expired; and Mary, the daughter of the Spanish princess, Catherine, came to the throne as his legal successor. Mary was fanatically committed to the papacy, and at once reversed the ecclesiastical policy of Edward. The papal legate, Cardinal Pole, was given the place of Cranmer as the spiritual light of England. The Church was re-Romanized, and Mary by her persecutions and legal executions of Protestants fairly won the title of "Bloody," an evil eminence that will cling to her memory through all time to come. Cranmer and Ridley were sent to the stake, and every possible effort was made to destroy their

work. The brief memory of the Edwardine Articles withered like the gourd vine of the prophet.

The reign of Mary, although esteemed too long by her subjects, was short. She was succeeded by her sister, Elizabeth, whose illustrious, but not wholly righteous, reign was begun by the complete restoration of the evangelical faith. In 1562, by her authority, a commission headed by the new primate, Archbishop Parker, undertook a recension of the Edwardine Articles. The result of the work of this commission was the reduction of the Forty-Two Articles to Thirty-Nine. Notwithstanding the reduction of the number of tenets, considerable new matter was added. In this addition the compilers "made special use of the Augsburg and Wurtemberg Confessions." The final draft was at length adopted by the Established Church in the three kingdoms. Thus were completed the Thirty-Nine Articles from which our own are derived. Mr. Wesley's recension and abridgment (he added no new matter) reduced the Articles to Twenty-Four. The Church in America added later the Article (XXIII.) "Of the Rulers of the United States of America," making the number Twenty-Five.

The Thirty-Nine Articles not only follow, as we have seen, the Augsburg Confession in the general drift of their subject-matter, but in many of their chief sections they either adopt or very closely approach its verbal forms. Other sections are inspired from the writings of Luther, Melancthon, and Erasmus, the last-named of whom, in the time of the great humanists, Colet and More, helped to lay at Oxford the foundations of the new learning. The Protestant



statement of Ratisbon and the Confession of Wurtemberg, prepared by the Lutheran leader Brentz, to be submitted to the Council of Trent, were also drawn upon. But notwithstanding this historic descent, the Thirty-Nine Articles contain the voice of England—her own proper cry against the man of sin, the Roman anti-Christ, her own confession of the faith once delivered to the saints, and also her appeal from the incomplete ideals of the German Reformers to the better-interpreted Word of God. Not Lutheran, not “Reformed” in the restricted historic sense, is this Confession of Cranmer, but Anglican, Protestant, in the attained and prophetic sense in which England and her children have always, in their era, written the world’s last word of progress. Magna Charta lives in the Declaration of 1776; the Twenty-Five Articles preserve the undiminished ideals of England’s great Confession.

Our study of the antecedents of the Church’s Articles has a twofold purpose—namely, first, to serve humbly in the office of historian; and, secondly, to establish the doctrine of the criteria of dogmatic statements. The fact of succession has been uncovered. The proof of the law is at hand. Professor James Orr, of Glasgow, in his lectures on “The Progress of Dogma”—a work not always coherent, but illuminative of the particular point—contributes to this argument on the continuity of symbolical development in theology. His elaborate treatise is built up around the theory that theology has been developed in two lines, one of which he calls the theological system, the other the historical development of dogma. I have already shown from the record of confessions that the “system” must either

perfect, or assert, itself at every point before an authoritative historic utterance can be made. The relation of our Articles, through the English draft, to the Augsburg Articles, and these to the ancient symbols and standards, is a concrete illustration of the Scotch critic's theory.

Another strong, though indirect, contribution to this argument is found in the reasoning of Dean Mansell in his Bampton Lectures on "The Limits of Religious Thought Examined." His observation that "dogmatism and rationalism are the points between which religious thought oscillates" is a preparation for his attempt to reduce theology to the terms of an exact science. The inevitable conclusion is that it is a science only as history is a science, except that it is more certain of its facts, facts being the contents of both. That which should be stated dogmatically finds its time and place as the answer of necessity. The empirical element is not in it. Bishop Browne in seeking the proper interpretation of the language of the English Articles says that "next to their natural, literal, and grammatical meaning" their interpretation must be found in "a knowledge of the controversies which had prevailed in the Church and made such Articles necessary"

Confessions, like Scripture and like all enduring and symbolical literature, must needs have a peculiar language in which to embody themselves, as also they must needs have been themselves the product of crucial times—the ends or the beginnings of ages. Thus Bishop Burnet observes what is familiar to all students of early Church creed-making—namely, that the phrase,

"of one substance with the Father" (*homoousian*), applied in our Second Article to the Son, is an evolution of the ages of Christological controversy. Previous to the adoption of this phrase, every term invented to declare the Godhead of the Son had been wrested and misinterpreted; but this has stood, and defies all assaults. The language of these Confessions is not to be lightly changed. They are properly written in the venerable and unchanging terms of the centuries that gave them birth. Only the fiery necessities which made them can change them. "Symbols" they are properly called, and as symbols they will stand. They were not meant to cover the whole field of Christian doctrine: that would be a needless work, with the New Testament open to all. But they were meant to stand, so long as the age shall last, as protests made in the name of truth and liberty against active forms of untruth and oppression.

Our Articles will thus be seen to stand in line with what Professor Orr assumes to be a law in theology, when they are studied as the echo and verified survival of the orthodox protests of the Christian ages. One may easily trace in these Articles the effects of the great controversies of Christianity from the time of St. John to the noonday of the Reformation. The first four Articles are a survival of the protests of the orthodox Church against the heresies that appeared up to and including the age of the Nicene Council, the first four centuries of Christianity. The First Article, which declares the supremacy and pure spirithood of God, is the very first written confession of the Church—its protest against the idolatry of paganism.

The Second and Third Articles are a protest against the Gnostics, the Docetists, and the Cerinthians who defamed or denied the divinity of the Son. The Fourth, taken in conjunction with parts of the First and Second, is the early Church's voice against Arianism. Nearly all the early confessions begin and end with these tenets. This leads Bishop Burnet to say: "It had been a great blessing to the Church if a stop had been put here, and that those nice descantings that were afterwards so much pursued had been more effectually discouraged than they were. But men ever were and ever will be men."

The next great historical controversy was that with Pelagianism, and that has its echo in the Seventh and Eighth Articles of our Confession. What remains of the Confession has, mainly, to do with the contest with Rome. There are at least four stages of this controversy. The first, as the Articles stand, is that which rebukes the Romish degradation of the canon and authority of Scripture and appears in the Fifth and Sixth Articles. The second is that which concerns justification by faith and related doctrines, and this is represented in Articles Nine to Twelve, inclusive. The third stage concerns the constitution and authority of the Church and the nature of the sacraments. This is represented in Articles Thirteen and Fifteen to Twenty, inclusive. The fourth and last stage of controversy with Rome concerns its abuses and superstitions, and this is embodied especially in Articles Fourteen and Twenty-One and more or less in those of the other two sections. Though perhaps unintentionally, our American-made Article on obedience to

secular authority is a logical protest against the papal claim of secular supremacy

There are indeed two Articles—Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five—which may be said to be of prophetic significance, since they deal with matters which have more relevancy now than when they were written—namely, as protests against socialism and against profanation and perjury of oath.

Thus we see by the history and from the spirit of our own Articles that the confessions of the Church have been historical protests against heresy and untruth, and as such they stand to-day. The Church's creed is, and has always been, the Book, with that simple formula of its truth which has served catholic Christianity practically from its beginning.

AUTHORITY AND USE.

The Bible, the Bible is the creed of Protestants.—*Chillingworth*.

All the framers of these Articles contemplated was to raise up a standard of Scripture truth, and to send forth a protest against the fatal errors and corruptions of Rome.—*J. A. Jimison, "Notes on the Articles of Religion" (1868)*.

With respect to the moral universe, which we know to be the final cause of all divine activity and whose interest must forever be supreme, we know that its great principles and laws are immutable, and the same for all worlds, however the components may vary.—*Bishop Randolph S. Foster, "Theology."*

This also shows the tyranny of that Church which has imposed the belief of every one of her doctrines on the consciences of her votaries under the highest pains of anathemas, and *as articles of faith*. But the Church of England very carefully avoided the laying that weight upon even those doctrines which she receives as true; and therefore she drew up a large form of doctrine, yet to all her lay sons this is only a standard of what she teaches.—*Bishop Burnet*.

## CHAPTER III.

### *AUTHORITY AND USE.*

THE Twenty-Five Articles are an authoritative declaratory standard of those doctrines and teachings of Christianity which have been the chief subjects of historic controversies. This characterization is to be so extended as to include the affirmation that the doctrines so treated are still in controversy. For instance, the materialism, pantheism, and Unitarianism of to-day, if not historical survivals of the heresies against which the first Articles of the Confession (derived from early symbols) are aimed, are at least recrudescences of their spirit and teachings. The folly that mocks at sin and that makes light of the mystery of iniquity renews its youth like the vulture of the shambles. As to the persistence of those abuses and false doctrines cried against in the anti-Romish tenets, there can be neither denial nor doubt. The asseverations and protests find their justifying objectives alive and in active habit.

We have already seen that the contents of the Twenty-Five Articles are not peculiar to Methodist theology, but are of the letter and substance of catholic orthodoxy and Protestantism. The Articles came to Methodism as an inheritance, being itself Anglican in spirit and history. But it is Anglican only in the sense that it fulfills the law that each new generation



normally embodies the best of its antecedents and gathers to itself the higher fruitage of ideals borne by its own time. It is in the likeness of the past; it is also in the likeness of the present. It is therefore of the past, and yet not of it. This is Methodism with reference to its doctrinal inheritance from the Church of England. Its canons of authority are venerable, but its experience is fresh with the breath and sunlight of to-day.

The peculiar doctrines of Methodism—those which have been found potent in spreading scriptural holiness over the lands—are found in its official books or standards. These are also authoritative to a peculiar degree. Of this authority there has never been any strict definition. The doctrines have survived through fitness rather than ecclesiastical indorsement. In their unformulated shape they have been far more effective than if they had been put into the scholastic terms of a regulation statement. They have the advantage of a homiletical and argumentative setting, thus most nearly approximating the narrative and epistolary lines within which their originals are found in the New Testament. This was unquestionably the medium of doctrinal statement in the Church of the Fathers. Ante-Nicene literature is seen to be a vast arena in which there was much freedom, much effort, and in which the first great formulary of the Church was wrought out in spirit before it was set down in words. The Church of the future must give itself to the same liberty of interpretation if it would profit by the light which comes to it from both history and prophecy. The text-book which asks no authority

other than that which appeals to the truth of its contents and the soundness of its methods is to be the book of the law to future man. But the books of Methodism are not without ecclesiastical indorsement, and that indorsement is expressed in canonical terms.

Notwithstanding the particular and practical value of our doctrinal books, the Twenty-Five Articles, by reason of their Wesleyan recension and their adoption by the body of the elders, have become the permanent symbol of Methodism. So certain has been the Church of their value and inherited authority that it has built about them the defenses of its organic law, which forbids its lawmaking body to "revoke, alter, or change" them. The preponderant Methodist body in America has made the Articles a part of its Constitution, and also requires candidates for Church membership to avow belief in them. We do not say anything here of the wisdom or logical correctness of this subscription requirement, or even as to whether the Articles are a proper content of the Church Constitution; but this free and studied action of the greatest Methodist body in the world shows the measure of authority which these Articles have gathered into themselves.

The Articles are not only a doctrinal guide and inspiration to the ministry and laity of the Church—an indicatory statement of the essentials of belief and teaching, so far as they have been historically in question—but they are a catalogue of the chief divisive issues of Christendom, and issues still divisive and persistent. It may be difficult to define the exact relations which the Articles bear to the Church. It may be even difficult to determine the extent of the author-

ity secured to them; but the relation is vital and the authority is genuine. The disseminating of doctrines contrary to them, or willfully and seriously deviating from them in teaching, constitutes an offense for the punishment of which there are established penalties. The justice of this provision rests in the conviction that the Church's doctrines are as important as its ethics. But as the Church does not undertake to write—indeed could not healthily write—a rule for every detail of ethical conduct, so it does not undertake every detail of doctrinal interpretation. In both doctrine and ethics it consistently indicates the main truths or teachings, in both negative and positive statements, and refers the responsible judgment of the individual believer to the source of enlightenment in the divine Word.

The main argument for an extended dogmatic statement of doctrines is, whether expressed or not, a doubt of the ability of the individual Christian to correctly interpret Scripture. This assumes that modern speech terms have a facility and expressiveness not possessed by the ancient, and that the direct effect of the Scriptures on the mind is something less than definite. This was the assumption on which Rome early departed, to bring up with her dogma of an infallible Church and a catena of infallible traditions. The authority and enduring value of any theological formula is to be sought in its conservatism. Radical efforts at comprehensiveness of content and detail of statement look toward a dwarfed and hampered private interpretation. The effect is hierarchical at bottom, though the agency were the lowest Low-Churchism.

In the English Church the creed proper is made up of the three great historic early Church symbols—namely, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian—but the baptismal vow and the credal condition of membership in that Church are identical with those in our own. Also the conditions of ministerial ordination are the same—that is, unfeigned faith in the sufficiency of the teachings of Holy Scripture for eternal salvation. But the Anglican clergy are required to subscribe the Thirty-Nine Articles. That nominally means belief in them and a pledge to teach them entirely. But many reservations have come to attach to the question of subscription, especially in recent times. No less distinguished and orthodox an authority than W. Robertson Nicoll, editor of the *British Weekly*, said in 1901: "The question of subscription is difficult, and we are far from wishing to press it." The Methodist Church, true to its traditions of liberality and fervent orthodoxy, for the maintenance of which it depends more on a lively faith and an intelligent study of Scripture than upon confession and subscription, does not require of its ministers subscription to any human symbols, but only to the Word of God. Yet the Articles and the Standards have not the less authority on this account, and the former, being shorn of some irrelevancies and remains of mediævalism, more nearly represent the exact faith of the Church in the things of which they treat.

It is evident that the matter of subscription in the English Church was originally as much a detail of the plan for securing political loyalty as it was a scheme for securing uniformity of belief. In a State Church

threatened from without and from within by the power of the papacy, and disturbed by treasonable factions, there was no recourse but in a clerical oath. Civil and credal loyalty were of a piece. Subscription became necessary to bind the ministers of religion, who were the keepers of the consciences of the people and the leaders of their thought.

The discussion of the question of subscription in England in recent times has developed an interesting view of the whole matter of the authority of confessions. The result of the discussion seems to be favorable to an intellectual assent as opposed to subscription. A truer loyalty is thereby secured. The natural affections and higher affinities of life are not grounded in formally assumed obligations, and yet they are the most real and the most lasting. Religious loyalty, if not wholly analogous to the natural affections, at least involves them and must find its highest pledge in intellectual and spiritual commitments. It is useless to demand loyalty to that which has lost its power of appeal to a free and hearty choice of intellect or faith.

The Church is not built on formularies or creeds, but upon the person and truth of Christ—the Christ perfectly portrayed in the New Testament, and the truth which is the medium of that portrayal. Nevertheless, as Christ himself has made plain, the visible Church—the Church of fellowship and human ministry—does rest on personal confession or acknowledgment of him. This is the rock of its manifestation. Simon Peter was the first Christian confessor and his confession went to record as a precedent. We have al-

ready noted the historical element in it. It was a confession that contented itself with the single fact involved—the Messiahship of Jesus, the Son of Man. It is not only a precedent but a model. Even the personal confession does not need to be voiced or written in entirety. It profanes the treasures of the heart to lay them all naked. There is a secret between the believer and the Most High. There were a holy and a most holy place in the temple, and in the latter burned the glory of the Shekinah, hidden from the gaze of even devout Israel. The collective confessions of believers stand in the same case as that of the individual. The ideal confession could not be written were the attempt made. There is always more in our consciousness of God than can ever be put into our words, and infinitely more in God than our consciousness can contain.

Allowing that all which has just been said will pass without controversy, there still remains room for the authoritative writing of what is needful for the Church's faith. It is of the necessity of things theological that so much as has been, and still remains, a cause of stumbling should be formulated and that with authority. This canon on stumbling must, however, not be extended so as to cover the mere intellectual limitations of the many, the misadventures of provincial theologians, and the scholastic vagaries of the few. The correction of these is in the ordinary course of teaching and polemics. The confession that follows this rule is the perfect symbol. If this conformity cannot be fully claimed for the Twenty-Five Articles, it may be claimed to an extent which does not apply to any

existing formulary, or any that in the present condition of Christian thought could be made.

It is in my mind to make a frank statement concerning number Seven of the Articles of Methodism, and this is the connection in which it may be logically made. This tenet—"Of Original Sin"—is the only one that, in the present condition of theological thought, we would willingly see revised or restated. But our question concerning it relates not so much to the content of the Article—though we could wish it somewhat different—as to the fact that its subject, the origin of sin, was made a matter of statement at all. The doctrine of the origin of sin was never an issue between Protestantism and Romanism and has never been a subject of historical dispute inside Protestantism. Indeed, there has been practical agreement upon it. Luther and Melancthon incorporated it with the Augsburg Articles as a part of their provisional inventory of agreement from which they launched their charges against the abuses of the papacy. The addendum to their Article plainly instructed the Diet that it was directed against the Pelagians, and this record both the Thirty-Nine Articles and our own have preserved. The papal members of the Diet dissented from it in respect to but a single word, *concupiscence*; and there has been no serious divergence from it in other confessions. It was, strictly speaking, not the main element in the Pelagian controversy, but an involution. It might well have been left out of all confessions. The whole subject is luminously treated in the Scriptures, and is such a matter as men should be willing to be instructed concerning wholly "out of the said Scriptures." The

Article, however, has its uses; and while it might be spared, it may easily be defended.

The above observations must not be understood as even suggesting that the doctrine of sin is not a fundamental of the creed, or that a declaration concerning the cure of sin is not the paramount business of the confession. This exactly is the truth to which we hold, for the world knows God best as a Saviour *from sin*. We candidly construe the law of confessions in the hope of contributing in a small way to prevent a repetition of overstatement-making. The affirmation of the Apostles' Creed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," meets the requirement of the creed, and also the demands of the Scriptures. Our Twelfth Article, which declares that "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual," is complete as a confessional statement, and has the advantage of coming at the point of historical protest against the sacramentarian atonement proposed by Rome. Sin is too terrible a fact to be treated in speculative terms. It is indeed a risk to commit the doctrine of sin to any terms save those that keep close to the simplicity and directness of the words of Scripture. Under the head of the Seventh Article, in another chapter, I shall discuss this matter more fully. The question was raised here not on its doctrinal, but on its confessional, merits.

The availability and use of the Articles is a subject necessarily involved in the discussion of the questions relating to their authority. The use of the confession is found in the applicability of each tenet to some need



or needs of Church life and policy as a preventive, a corrective, or special rule. It is not the use of a catechism, a homily, or a book of systematic interpretations. It is the use of a code of decisions to a court, the court being the collective Church. It is what a sea chart is to a navigator, showing the rocks, the shoals, and the open sea path. Such a chart is not a physical geography of the sea; neither is the confession an epitome of theology.

The particular use of the Articles is indicated in their exclusive contents and in the symbolical character of their language—a language chastened, compressed, and significant in every term. They are memorials of the Church's advance, prophecies of her purpose for the future—her titles to autonomy and apostolic authority in the land to which she has so distinct a mission. They are not for babes, but for men—for warriors, the defenders of the faith, not in academic lists, but on fields where the destinies of the world are mingled. The hands which defended their originals were used to the iron gauntlet and the sword hilt. They could not so soon cease to be militant themselves. They are the voice of a Church which, though it has never trusted for defense in carnal weapons, yet employs weapons that are mighty to the pulling down of strongholds. When the militant age has passed, it may withdraw its militant word; not before.

Something else than the confession or the dogmatic statement is needed by the Church for elementary teaching, something else indeed is needed in its wider evangelization. Very young Christians and converts from heathenism need only the brief formulæ con-

tained in the Apostles' Creed, the rote of the catechism, and a plentiful help in the study of the naked Word. Unhusked dogmas test the gastric powers of the wise. Babes require sincere (or native) milk. Imperial Rome shortened the hafts of her spears and extended the borders of her empire. When the Churches can shorten their dogmatic statements, they will perceive a yielding in the ranks that oppose them.

The Bible is the Church's rule of faith; the confession its rule of doctrine in those matters which have been historically dogmatized out of their scriptural relations. The exceptions to this rule, those correlates necessary to the perfect understanding of the necessitated tenets, only establish it. Where questions of belief are unmooted in this wider sense, and where the letter of revelation covers the essential facts, a dogmatic tenet is superfluous and inevitably begets intellectual bondage. To this ideal of exclusiveness the Twenty-Five Articles answer with a degree of completeness that is both singular and significant. Their use is thus plainly indicated to be corrective and confirmatory of the higher thinking of the Church. A more radical use of the Confession would be un-Protestant, at least so far as concerns that Protestantism through which we trace our confessional descent.

Our seeking for a canon governing the uses of the Articles has brought us to this—namely, that the Articles are a fixed standard by which the Church's theology may be measured, and to which it can be made to conform if found deviating or wandering from the essential truths of Christianity as they are defined in the catholic creeds. They are also a definition of the

Church's attitude toward the great historic issues that expound the present religious and intellectual status of Christendom. Never in their Methodistic, nor seldom in their Anglican, office have these Articles been made an instrument of oppression; but in each they have often been wholesomely corrective and repressive. Three passages in the history of the Church of England attest this use. These passages refer to the formulating of the "Lambeth Articles," the setting up of the "Irish Articles," and the attempt to foist upon the Church of England the findings of the Synod of Dort.

The first of the two historic attempts to restate, or substitute, the Thirty-Nine Articles occurred in 1595. In that year a company of Calvinistically inclined divines of Oxford and Cambridge succeeded in getting Archbishop Whitgift to call a statement-making synod to meet at Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop's residence. The result of the sitting of this synod was the so-called "Lambeth Articles," nine in number, and ultra-Calvinistic in matter and tone. The method pursued in the attempt to set these Articles up is worthy of note. They were not to supplant the Thirty-Nine Articles, but were to stand beside them as a complementing statement. They did not introduce new matter (which the anti-Calvinists with good reason denied), but simply interpreted the old, putting it into newer and fuller language. The scheme for exalting these Genevan vagaries came perilously near succeeding. Had it succeeded, there had, in all probability, never been an Arminian party in the Church of England, and therefore no Wesleyan Reformation. The unique character and historical sufficiency of the

Church's Confession saved its theology at a critical moment. The predilection of the Queen for the old statement and the support of a strong minority in the Church held the Lambeth restatement party in check until the reaction against the Calvinistic infatuation, which had already begun at Cambridge, swept England from the Tweed to Torbay.

A despairing effort was made by the Puritan party as late as during the reign of King James (1604) to have the Lambeth tenets placed in the book of Articles, but it was abortive. The theology of the Church of England had shown itself to be something other than Lutheran; it could not be deflected into the school of Geneva. The Lambeth Articles were not; they died of inanition, and who is it outside of the circle of bookish divines who has ever heard of them?

In the year 1615 a movement in the Irish Church, similar to the Lambeth movement, resulted in what was known as the "Irish Articles"—a series of one hundred and four tenets, "systematic and complete," as the historian informs us. This statement was not considered a displacement of the Thirty-Nine Articles, but a newer house, so to speak, of the same material, though it must be seen that the new matter preponderated. This "systematic" Confession, very Calvinistic, very Puritan, actually gained the ascendancy for a brief time, though for part of this time the Thirty-Nine Articles stood side by side with it. But though the great name of Usher was sponsor for the "Irish Articles," they soon yielded to the inevitable and fell away as a symbol, leaving the Thirty-Nine Articles intact and in their former place. The spirit of these

Irish tenets reëmbodied itself in the Westminster Confession, adopted thirty years later. It was the inherent strength and historic fitness of the Thirty-Nine Articles that saved in Ireland a remnant of the people from Romanism and Calvinism, and thus made possible the soil in which Irish Methodism has so long flourished.<sup>1</sup>

King James in 1618, more as a political measure than out of theological consideration, sent a non-participating delegation to the Synod of Dort, which was to hear the plea of the Arminian Remonstrants against the supporters of the "five points of Calvinism." This quinquarticular controversy had been intolerantly prejudged by the Calvinists, so that their finding (they being overwhelmingly in the majority) was considered by James and the leaders in England an outrage on justice. Nevertheless, the Calvinistic party in England, ready almost to identify the "Institutio" of Calvin with the revelations of the Sacred Volume,<sup>2</sup> arose again in an effort to *Genevaize* the Church of England. To cure this dissension and distress, the King was advised to order a reprint of the Thirty-Nine Articles to accompany the royal declara-

---

<sup>1</sup>It is worthy of remark here that no subsidiary or complementary confession has ever attained the importance of the original, or supplanted it. Creeds have been successfully amended, as the Nicene; but only in fragmentary additions which coalesced with the original, making a unity. This applies to historic formularies and not to discursive theological writings which sometimes go under that head; as, for instance, some of the Helvetic and other "Reformed" Statements.

<sup>2</sup>Hardwick.

tion of 1626, absolving the realm and the Church from the assumption of complicity in the findings of the Synod of Dort. For the time being the Thirty-Nine Articles prevailed. Twenty years later, however, they suffered a total eclipse by the Westminster Confession; but within another twenty years outrode it in their native heavens, and saw it, in the Toleration Act of 1689, shrink to the disk of a star of lesser magnitude.

The historical digression in which we have indulged is a perfectly pertinent one. The earlier triumphs of the Confession are a part of our inheritance. If in its unexpurgated form it was invincible amongst its competitors, what may not be predicted of it stripped and conformed to the new spirit which it symbolizes? The age which challenges these Articles must explain their concomitant phenomena in Methodist history. They have had with us a spiritual use greater than their temporal use in the century of England's revolutions. This must come of their close conformity to the spirit of Scripture. To secure proof of this we have only to put under rule the generations of scripturally developed experience, testimony, and holy living which have characterized the Methodism of the Western world. A confession which does not help the spiritual life of the people who hold it is a body of death.

In some Churches the catechism has been accepted as of equal authority with the dogmatic statement, and has been placed beyond the ordinary means of change or alteration. This has been especially true of the catechisms of the Calvinistic Churches. The Lutheran

catechisms have also maintained a high authority; Anglicanism likewise has its canonical catechism. But it is not so with Methodism; the catechism has been the medium of a progressive interpretation of its doctrines, and has chiefly helped to secure a healthy progress in the study of Scripture. It must be admitted, however, that the catechism, except in a primary way, has served no conspicuous or institutional use in Methodism. But there have been other means of enlightenment. From the beginning there has existed in all Methodist bodies a current official literature which has constantly served in what otherwise had been the office of the catechism. This has been, and must continue to be, the channel through which Methodism is to receive and give out the inspiration of its developing ideals. This is the natural path of its intellectual activities. Methodism is wonderfully balanced and conserved in having its historic Articles on the one hand and its expanding current and technical literature on the other. The age is hers, and she need indulge no doubt as to her call to work out the problems created in a time when as yet she had no being.

Here is use indeed. The coming century—it may be the coming millennium—will bring upon the field of contest the feet of the great issues prophesied in these Articles. It would be too feeble a designation of that contest to call it by the old name which the perfidy of Rome suggested. It is, nevertheless, the old contest. But old though it be, new weapons must be devised for it—more keenly, trenchantly intellectual, but not less spiritual. The old watchword is to stand, the watchword fashioned by the confessors to whose

vows we have succeeded. There is something not only romantic, but malignly prophetic, in that word "Eternal," which Rome has written lengthwise the fillet of her miter. The still youthful spirit of Protestantism has answered that challenge by writing the same word across the page on which stand the lightning-wreathen Articles of her protest.

Dr. Schaff, anticipating objections not current even in his day, says: "Another reason the reformers had for descending to so many particulars, and for all these negatives (anti-Romish Articles) that are in their confessions, was this: they had smarted long under the tyranny of popery, so they had reason to secure themselves from it and from all those who were leavened with it." That use of the Articles holds to-day with increasing emphasis, more especially as Rome is being forced by State disestablishment into an open intellectual contest. She will now everywhere, as she has done in this country, strip herself of her more apparent abuses, thus making her doctrinal subtleties more dangerous than ever. France has not only expatriated her Jesuits but has given the world a new problem in the neo-Romanism which her recent cultural policy has produced. History is a series of sequences. Rome not only drove the Reformers into a distinct Church, but by her Tridentine dogmas made herself the issue of Protestantism for a thousand years to come.

The Articles and doctrinal standards of Methodism are so nearly quadrated with the New Testament that the way is always open to its adherents to use, without doctrinal compromise, any new light which may



be thrown upon the text or teachings of the written Word. The success of Methodism has nearly always been attributed to either its aggressive methods of evangelism, or else to a certain appeal which it has been able to make to experience. The word *emotion* has invariably been mentioned in connection with the latter. It is a profound error to refer the growth of Methodism to either or both of these as chief causes. Beyond any doubt, the experimental preaching of Methodism has been one of its large assets; but the sum of its doctrines has been its first and highest challenge. It offers definite truth with the largest freedom of individual thought. That freedom is secured by the wonderful conformity of its standards of doctrine to the confessional ideal. There is no serious excess on the one hand, nor serious lack on the other. This result is not of the wisdom of man, but of the providence of God. It is not the prerogative of any man to disturb this balance.

Many thousands of converts have come into Methodism by the sheer path of emotion, to learn its larger lessons later; but Methodism won its empire in the great and restless West, as in the staid and exacting Old World, by offering the truth of salvation in living formulæ, as variant in terms as the gifts and experiences of those who bore it, and yet perfectly answering to the Word. Especially was the early preaching of Methodism doctrinal. It was of repentance; a Saviour seen by faith, conscious forgiveness, and the abiding witness, followed by scriptural holiness. Methodism in its early years troubled itself about little else. It has no need to do so now. Its

doctrines are a well-knit harness covering the vital parts of its body; and as for the rest, the written Word is its source of sufficiency. It is free from credal impedimenta. Its spirit is thus fitted to take the initiative of providence and opportunity.

Perhaps a sufficient historical reason why the Confession of Methodism is no more comprehensive than it is, is found in the observation of Bishop Burnet "that a very high degree of certainty is required to affirm a negative." Our Articles, because of a historical necessity which we have fully traced, deal largely with negatives, and yet their distinguishing tone is certainty. This is a prime and important test, for every new statement is a new limitation imposed upon individual freedom of interpretation. In making such a test there is no room for empiricism or academic temporizing. Conclusions both definite and pertinent must be exhibited, and there must be behind them the necessity of life and death. Otherwise let them plead their message as a private revelation.

St. Paul no doubt referred to some very early symbol of faith when he exhorted the Church's teachers to preserve "the form of sound words." These forms were almost certainly unwritten; but they carried certainty in their brevity and directness. They stimulated the memory which bore them, as they stimulated the faith which received them. But for the necessity of protesting against popery, the Churches of Protestantism might have no such written statements as they have, holding only the symbols of early Christianity. But history has made its record. Who shall contest it?



# ORIGIN

## I. THE DOCTRINAL ARTICLES.

Controverted beliefs are the only ones that are profound; besides, the same controversies that strengthen the intellect strengthen also the character.—*Nisard*.

The Creed [the Apostles' Creed], without controversy, is a brief comprehension of the objects of our Christian faith, and is generally taken to contain all things necessary to be believed.—*Bishop Pearson on the Creed*.

Upon these terms the Church of God is constituted. It is a congregation, association, community of men, called of God, to whom the Holy Spirit has shown the things of Christ, and imparted his power that they may be his witnesses in all the world.—*Bishop Wilson, "Witnesses to Christ."*

On studying the results of his endeavors in the Augsburg Confession [they] are found breathing the same cordial deference for the teaching of the past which characterizes nearly all the writings of Melancthon while in theological terminology it [the Confession] everywhere adheres, as closely as the truth permitted, to existing standards of the Western Church.—*Archdeacon Hardwick*.

## CHAPTER IV

### *ORIGIN.*

#### I. THE DOCTRINAL ARTICLES.

THE study of comparative dogmatics on an extended scale would correct many misapprehensions as to the need and utility of detailed confessions and dogmatic theological statements. I am not aware that this study has been attempted beyond the cataloguing and analyzing of the formularies of the different Churches. Professor Schaff's great work in this respect is little more than a huge scrapbook, and in its analytical parts is entirely satisfactory only to Calvinists, to whose school he belonged. I am making bold to attempt here in a small way this task of comparison by showing the particular sources, ancient and contemporaneous, from which the Twenty-Five Articles were derived, and also to indicate the immediate controversies which influenced their writing.

I have already traced with more or less detail the history of the Twenty-Five Articles; so as to show their kinship with the great historic symbols and confessions. This I did for two reasons—namely, first to show the dignity of their genesis, that they are worthy of consideration from their so great and tried antiquity, and also to show that they have been chastened and compressed by the force of every great historical exigency until the language in which they now

appear has been made to express the ultimate of that of which language is capable. But to be able to see the quarries out of which these enduring formulas were taken, and to view the answering segments of the original formations, must be to enhance their interest and greatly augment their usefulness.

The First Article, "Of Faith in the Holy Trinity," is traceable through the Augsburg Article treating of the same subject back to the two great creeds of the Church—the Nicene and the Athanasian—and through these back to the very earliest symbols of Christianity. The Augsburg Article reads:

There is one divine essence which is called, and is, God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Nicene Creed, formulated by the first Council of Nicea, which was convened by the Emperor Constantine in 325 to pronounce against the Arians, contains this tenet on the Godhead:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

This will be readily recognized as an enlargement of the same tenet in the Apostles' Creed; but the Athanasian Creed, which certainly dates to the fifth century, completes the orthodox formula of Catholic Christianity. With the Nicene terms added, it fully covers the range of our First Article. The Athanasian tenet reads:

We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance—of one glory and coeternal majesty—uncreated—incomprehensible—infinite—eternal—Almighty. There is one Father—there is one Son—there is one Holy Ghost—and (yet) in this Trinity none is afore or after another; none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are eternal and coequal.

The Second Article, “Of the Word, or Son of God, who was made Very Man,” may be traced in the readings of the Athanasian Creed, as the following excerpt will show:

The Son of God is God and man: God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the substance of his mother, born in the world. Perfect God and Perfect Man (Very God and Very Man), not two, but one Christ who suffered for our salvation, and descended into the grave [Greek, Hades<sup>1</sup>] and was buried.

The Nicene Creed adds:

And [we believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ the only-begotten of God. Very God of Very God, begotten not made being of one substance (*homoousian*) with the Father—who for us men, and our salvation, came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried.

The phrase “who is the Word of God,” occurring in our Second Article, is found in no form in either the Athanasian or the Nicene Creed. The controversy concerning the “Logos” in the Christ nature had not

---

<sup>1</sup>The scholastic dogma of the descent of Christ into hell after his crucifixion rests in this term, which is purely figurative for the grave. We have taken the liberty to so define it.



arisen. It did arise, however, shortly after the completion of the Nicene Creed. Apollinaris in his zeal for the creed practically denied the presence of a human soul in Christ, asserting that its place was supplied by the essential Divinity. Nestorius later appears to have taught the doctrine of two Persons. Still later came Eutyches and taught that the divine substance in Christ (that is, the Logos) absorbed the human. The creed of Chalcedon which corrected these errors is the source of this one of our Articles, as this extract will show :

We then confess one and the same Son—our Lord Jesus Christ—to be acknowledged in two natures. Unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union; but rather the property of each nature being preserved and concurring in one Person, and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That portion of the Augsburg Article (III.) with which our own almost literally agrees reads thus :

The Word, that is the Son of God, assumed human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that the two natures, that is to say, human and divine, inseparably united in one Person, constitute one Christ, who is true God and man (very God and very Man), born of the Virgin Mary, who truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us and be a sacrifice not only for original sin (*pro culpa originis*) but also for the actual sins of men.

The clause “the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father,” is taken almost word for

word from the Wurtemberg Articles, to which reference has already been made.<sup>2</sup>

The Third Article, "Of the Resurrection of Christ," is found in both the Athanasian and the Nicene formularies, as also in the Apostles' Creed. The development is a natural and orderly one, as will be seen from the comparison.

The third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.—*Apostles' Creed*.

Now the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead.—*Nicene Creed*.

The third day he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead; at whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their works.—*Athanasian Creed*.

He truly arose on the third day, and then ascended to heaven that he might sit at the right hand of the Father. The same Christ will return again openly, that he may judge the living and the dead.—*Augsburg Confession*.

Christ did truly rise again from death, and took his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man's nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day.—*Anglican Article*.

The Fourth Article, "Of the Holy Ghost," is pre-eminently catholic and orthodox. Up to the meeting of the Council of Nicea the doctrine concerning the

---

<sup>2</sup>This passage in the Wurtemberg Article is: "*Verum et æternum Deum, Patri suo consubstantialem.*"

Holy Ghost had been only indirectly involved in any Church controversy. The discussions touching the divinity of the Son had moved about it, but had not touched it directly. The Nicene Fathers accordingly wrote in their Confession only the words: "And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost." But by the time of the meeting of the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.), fifty-six years later, the necessity for a fuller definition being apparent, the tenet was amended to read as follows:<sup>3</sup>

And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of Life who proceedeth from the Father.

The "Filioque," or the double procession—"and from the Son"—was added by the third Council of Toledo in the sixth century, but it appears in the Athanasian Creed, which is at least a century older. The Athanasian tenet reads thus:

The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son; not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeding.

The Augsburg Confession has no separate tenet on the Holy Ghost, the doctrine concerning the third Person of the Trinity being set forth in the First Article, "Of God," which we have quoted already. But the

---

<sup>3</sup>Modern Unitarianism has made much of the fact that for four centuries there was no statement in the Church of the doctrine of the Trinity. We have in this fact the most pertinent illustration of the true theory concerning the development of the Confession—namely, that controversy and necessity have made, and only can properly make, dogmas. The doctrine of the Trinity existed in the Scriptures from the beginning, but not until the fourth century did it find confessional statement.

Wurtemberg tenet under the same head is almost identical with our own. Rendered from the Latin, it reads :

We believe the Holy Ghost from eternity proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

The Fifth and Sixth Articles, relating to the canonicity and authority of the Holy Scriptures, are leveled at the error of the Romish Church in elevating tradition to an equality with revelation, and also against the false canon of the Apocrypha. They were, with the exception of the last sentence of the Fifth Article,<sup>4</sup> original with the English Confessors and were probably the first formal protests ever written against the degradation of the Canon of Scripture by Rome. The Council of Trent, in 1546, fixed in the Roman Catholic canon several Apocryphal books, and anathematized those who rejected them. Six years later the Edwardine Articles were written ; but when Archbishop Parker revised these Articles in the time of Elizabeth, the additional sentence was added. The canonical books were named in order, as were also the Apocryphal books in a rejected list. This rejected list does not appear in the Article of the Wesleyan recension. The Wurtemberg Article reads :

The name Holy Scripture applies to those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority there was never doubt in the Church.

---

<sup>4</sup>The sentence referred to is the complete Article of the Wurtemberg Confession on the Scriptures, written in 1552. It was added by Archbishop Parker to the Edwardine Article.

The decrees of the Council of Trent (which fixed the doctrines of modern Romanism), against which so many of our Articles were promulgated, declare as follows:

The truth is contained in the written books [or Scriptures] and in the unwritten traditions [*sine scripto traditionibus*] which received by the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us transmitted as it were from hand to hand—and we receive and venerate with equal feeling of piety and reverence all the books of the Old and the New Testament, as also the said traditions, relating as well to faith as to morals, as having either from the mouth of Christ himself or from the dictation of the Holy Ghost, been preserved by continuous succession in the Catholic Church.<sup>5</sup>

With this decree went an enumeration of the Apocryphal books as Holy Scripture equal with the rest—to wit: Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, and two books of Maccabees, first and second.

Professor Schaff expresses astonishment that the Augsburg Confession should have no tenet on the canonicity of the Holy Scriptures. But if he had considered the historic rule which his own labors helped to discover, he had found no cause for wonder. The Augsburg Articles were written in 1530, and the Roman Catholic Church did not declare the canonicity of the Apocrypha until sixteen years later, a year after the death of Luther. Up to that time the Vulgate on the basis of Jerome's translation had been accepted as

---

<sup>5</sup>The most absurd and extravagant dreams of the fathers and schoolmen were credited to this reservoir of tradition. Thus was Rome able to "prove" her most preposterous dogmas.

the canon,<sup>6</sup> neither had there been up to this time a dogma on tradition. It was resentment produced by the Augsburg Articles that moved the Tridentine cardinals and bishops to adopt the *sine scripto* dogma. A sinister illustration of the rule!

The Seventh Article, "Of Original or Birth Sin," follows very closely the Augsburg Confession, as may be seen from a comparison. The Augsburg Article reads:

Since the fall of Adam all men who are naturally engendered are born with a depraved nature (that is, without the fear of God or confidence toward him, but with sinful propensities), we condemn the Pelagians and others who deny that this corruption is sin.

This tenet in the hands of both its German and English Confessors was primarily meant to express rejection of Pelagianism, which since the time of Pelagius had become a theological Proteus, having gone under many names and doubtless widely departed from what many now believe to have been the real teachings of Pelagius. The presence and doctrines of the Anabaptists were no doubt an immediate excitant of the Anglican prelates and doctors, for in the Edwardine Article, corresponding to this, to "the vain talk of the Pelagians" was added this other accusation, "which also the Anabaptists do nowadays renew." In addition to these reasons for the writing of the Article, it

---

<sup>6</sup>Jerome, who finished his translation of the Scriptures into the Latin in the fifth century, says of the Apocryphal books: "The Church doth now read them for example of life and for instruction of manners, but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine."

may be considered from the English and American standpoint as answer to the Council of Trent, which decreed thus:<sup>7</sup>

But this holy synod confesses, and is sensible, that in the baptized there remains concupiscence, or an incentive [to sin]. This concupiscence, which the apostle sometimes calls sin, the holy synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood it to be called sin, as being truly and properly sin in those born again.<sup>8</sup>

This and some other Articles of our Confession have sometimes been classified as "Calvinistic." This charge can grow only out of an imperfect information. The English Articles were written, as Bishop Browne well shows, before the Calvinistic controversy arose in England, even before its seed were sown. The internal evidence is also plain that the Articles came from an extra-Calvinistic source. It is also susceptible of proof that when the Marian exiles who returned from Geneva after the accession of Elizabeth urged a turning to the Swiss reformers for a form of confession Archbishop Parker and the rest held firmly to the Ed-

---

<sup>7</sup>The Council of Trent seemed once near passing no decree on the subject of original sin. The chief quarrel with Luther was that original sin remained after baptism. There were bishops in the Council who thought a definition unnecessary. As between Luther and the Catholics, they held it to be a dispute about words. Such was at one time the doubtful attitude of this disturbing dogma. This view is supported by the observations of Froude, the historian. (See "Council of Trent.")

<sup>8</sup>In this decree the Romish Church is in the attitude of declaring what would be sin in the unbaptized to be no sin in the baptized.

wardine draft. For the new matter which they introduced into it they returned to their old allies—the Lutherans. A fact of history so palpable and accessible as this should escape nobody.

Article VIII., "Of Free Will," is clearly in the spirit of the Augsburg Article with the same title, as may be seen from this extract:

Concerning free will our Churches teach that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things lying within the control of reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of being just before God, or yielding spiritual obedience; for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God; but this is accomplished in the heart, when the Holy Spirit is received through the Word.

Though there is so close a resemblance in this language to that of our Eighth Article, it is again to the Wurtemberg Confession that we must look for the true original. This Confession affirms that, though man after his fall (*post lapsum*) had some element of integrity or liberty left (*tantam animi integritatem relictam*), his condition is still "such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own strength and works for faith and calling upon God."<sup>9</sup> The last clause of the Article is taken almost verbatim from St. Augustine's work, "Of Grace and Free Will."

---

<sup>9</sup>The original Latin text of the Wurtemberg Article is: "*Quod autem nonnulli affirmant homini post lapsum tantam animi integritatem relictam, ut possit sese naturalibus suis viribus et bonis operibus, ad fidem et invocationem Dei convertere ac præparare haud obscure pugnat cum apostolica doctrina.*"



It is an interesting fact that of all the doctrines of the reformers this one concerning the will was least objected to in the Council of Trent. The divergence from it in any point was small. The decree of the Council on the matter was this:

If any saith, that, since Adam's sin, the free will of man is lost and extinguished; or that it is a thing with only a name, yea a name without a reality, a figment, in fine, introduced into the Church by Satan—if any man saith that it is not in man's power to make his ways evil—let him be anathema.

The quiet tone of the English Article is undoubtedly due to the recognition of the fact that the Romanists and the Protestants were so near together on the subject-matter of it. In truth, the Article had a more direct reference to the Anabaptists, who about this time in England were putting forth semi-Manichæan doctrines, adding to the claim that man might rise of his own free will the heresy that only the flesh participated in the fall, leaving the will and the mental powers unaffected.

Like the one immediately preceding it, the Ninth Article, "Of the Justification of Man," is in the spirit of its correspondent in the Augsburg Confession. The Augsburg Article is entitled simply "Of Justification," and reads:

Men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works; but they are justified gratuitously for Christ's sake, through faith; when they believe they are received into favor, and their sins are remitted on account of Christ who made satisfaction for our transgressions by his death.

There is likeness of spirit here, but for a certain origin we must, as in the case of the Article on "Free

Will," turn to the Wurtemberg Confession, whose language is almost literally followed. It is:

Man is made acceptable to, and accounted righteous before, God only for the sake of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, by faith.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone was the supreme issue between Protestantism and Romanism. It was Luther's cry against the papacy, which had claimed to be able to sell the grace of God for gold. The Council of Trent, whose real cause was the German monk, naturally approached the subject with trepidation. If it could undo Luther at that point, Protestantism would be arrested. If it failed, the consequences were not to be calculated. The course taken was characteristic. Finding it could not answer the tremendous Lutheran syllogisms, it sought to obscure the doctrine by covering it with scholastic definitions and planting it about with anathemas. More attention was given to Luther's doctrine of justification than to any other single subject. The cardinals, bishops, and delegates of the Pope went to the consideration of it in the belief that all the Lutheran errors might be strangled in this one. They finally drew up a decree on justification consisting of sixteen heads or sections, followed by thirty-three canons or anathemas against those who differed from the views of the Church. The chief element in the decree is as follows:

Justification is not remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace, and of the gifts, whereby unjust man becomes just, and an enemy a friend—of this

justification the causes are these: the final cause is indeed the glory of God, and of Jesus Christ, and life everlasting; the efficient cause is a merciful God who washes and sanctifies gratuitously, signing and anointing with the Holy Spirit—but the meritorious cause is his most beloved, only-begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ—the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism which is the sacrament of faith—lastly, the alone formal cause is the justice of God.

The Fathers of the Holy Tridentine Synod more than once in their Laocoön struggles inadvertently admitted the Lutheran doctrine of justification, but succeeded in losing it again in a multitude of scholastic and bewildering terms. Long as it is, there is probably less sacramentarianism in it than in any other decree or writing of the Council.

The Augsburg Article carrying the title “Of Good Works” is, next to the one on “The Power of the Church,” the longest tenet in that Confession. The English Article bearing the same title (Article X. of our Confession) is in accord with its teaching, and employs some of its terms, but is not in the direct line of descent from it. Its relation to the Wurtemberg statement is, however, as in the case of the two preceding Articles, unmistakable. The salient points of the extended Augsburg Article are to be seen in this paragraph:

First, that our works cannot reconcile us to God or merit the remission of our sins, or grace or justification: but this we can attain only by faith, when we believe that we are accepted by grace, for Christ’s sake, who alone is appointed our Mediator and propitiatory sacrifice, by which the Father is reconciled.

The Wurtemberg Article which is so certainly the verbal progenitor of our own reads thus:

Good works wrought by us cannot move the justice of God in the expiation of our sins, nor placate the divine wrath, nor merit eternal salvation. All good works which we have wrought are imperfect and cannot *endure the severity of God's judgment.*

The italicized words are identical with a clause in our Article. In this case, as in others, the tenet is an answer to the Council of Trent, which in condemnation of Luther's thesis on good works had entered a decree or canon the substance of which was that "justification is preserved and increased by good works; that the good works of the just which are the gift of God are withal the merits of the justified." In this is laid the foundation of the Romish doctrine of works of supererogation, which heresy is assailed in the next following of our Articles. This Article, Eleventh, "Of Works of Supererogation," had its inspiration in the identical controversy—the one concerning indulgences—which called the Augsburg Confession into being, but the form of it is entirely English. The Augsburg Confession contains no separate tenet on the subject, though it is discussed or adverted to in several, especially in the one on "Good Works." The Council of Trent in one of its last decrees anathematized those who denied that indulgences were profitable. The Romish doctrine of the merit of indulgences was grounded in the theory that the saints have accumulated a great stock of merit, in the performance of works over and above what was required of them, that may be drawn upon by those on earth. The papacy has the right and power to dispense this stored-up merit. This tenet Rome still holds. Hence the living pertinency of our Article.

The Twelfth Article, "Of Sin after Justification," which in the English Confession reads "Of Sin after Baptism," was changed by Mr. Wesley so as to conform in its title to the Anglican doctrine which it contains. It is purely Anglican-Wesleyan, and its language is unborrowed throughout. There is no title corresponding to it in the Augsburg Confession, but there is expressed in the Augsburg Article on Baptism a kindred sentiment, which may have suggested the need of a statement to the English Confessors. They condemn the doctrine of such as deny that those who have once been justified may lose the Holy Spirit. In like manner they condemn those who contend that some persons attain so high a degree of perfection in this life that they cannot sin.

The German Article was proclaimed against the Novatians and Anabaptists, by name. The English Article was particularly leveled against the Anabaptists, who about this time taught in England that a justified man "is without sin and free from all concupiscence, and that nothing of the old Adam remains in his nature, and so he cannot sin." They add that "all hope of pardon is taken away from those who, having received the Holy Ghost, fall into sin."

The providence which has preserved this Article to us is benign. It expresses as perhaps no other tenet in the Confession does the Wesleyan Arminianism of our theology. It exhibits also a most striking present-day pertinency. It has been a defense to the Church against a species of antinomianism that has recurred at longer or shorter intervals during the past hundred years. But although the English Confessors had such

abundant provocation in the offenses of the Anabaptists, a stronger reason for their Article was no doubt the Tridentine Canon, "*De S. Poenitentiae et extremæ unctionis Sacramento*" (Sacrament of Penance and Extreme Unction), promulgated the year before Cranmer and his associates completed their Confession. The substance of this canon is that "for sins committed after baptism the sacrament of penance is essential and sufficient." The Anglican answer is that only by the grace of God can we arise and amend our lives.



## ORIGIN.

### II. THE ANTI-ROMISH ARTICLES.



Religion flourishes best in the atmosphere of freedom, and need not fear error as long as truth is left free to combat it.—*Professor Schaff.*

Only one Priest do we have—namely, Christ, who offered himself for us all. This is a spiritual priesthood common to all Christians, whereby we are all priests with Christ.—*Martin Luther.*

The original Reformation was a revolt of the laity against the clergy, a revolt against a complicated and all-embracing practical tyranny, the most intolerable that the world has ever seen.—*James Anthony Froude, "The Council of Trent."*

Luther's revolution served the cause of Catholicism in another way. It imposed upon Catholics the necessity of giving a rational account of what was in them. It sent them back to a study of the sources of their doctrines, long buried under a mass of sophisms and superstitions. It quickened into new life both their theology and their philosophy.—*J. A. B. Scherer, "Four Princes."*

## CHAPTER V

### *ORIGIN.*

#### II. THE ANTI-ROMISH ARTICLES.

THE last thirteen Articles of the Wesleyan abridgment of the Anglican Confession, with the exception of those numbered Twenty-Four and Twenty-Five, are the embodiment of the protest against Rome. Nor does it require any great stretch of the rule to include the remaining two in the category, for in spirit they ally themselves to the others. They are proper formularies of Protestantism, avouching its purpose not only to elevate the believer to the priesthood of faith, but the individual citizen to personal responsibility in the commonwealth. It is a matter worthy of consideration and some extended study that the shape taken by the body of decrees and canons promulgated by the Council of Trent is answered in a striking and direct way in the form of the Anglican Confession. It is true that Cranmer and his associates had finished their work before the final adjournment of the Tridentine Council, which sat, at intervals, for twenty years—from 1543 to 1563. The bulk of its work had, however, been finished by 1552, the year in which the Edwardine Articles are supposed to have been completed. But though the next ten years brought forth its crops of Tridentine dogmas, and the whole was not published

officially until 1564, the scheme was known to the Protestant world by 1552. England was especially a close observer of the acts of the Holy Synod. I need but give here a list of the titles of the "doctrinal sessions" of Trent to show how an order so different from that of Augsburg was suggested to Cranmer and Ridley. The Tridentine order was as follows:

- III. Of the symbols of Faith, Nicene and Constantinopolitan.
  - 1. The Godhead.
  - 2. The Son.
  - 3. The Holy Ghost.
  - 4. The Trinity.
  - 5. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- IV. Of the Canon of Scripture.
- V. Of Original Sin (*Peccato Originali*).
- VI. Of Justification (*De Justificatione*).
- VII. Of the Sacraments in General.
  - 1. Of Baptism (*De Baptismo*).
  - 2. Of Confirmation.
- XIII. Of the Eucharist (*Eucharistae Sacramento*).
- XIV. Of Penance and Extreme Unction.
- XXI. Of Communion under both kinds.
- XXII. Of the Sacrifice of the Mass.
- XXIII. Of the Catholic Doctrine of Orders.
- XXIV. Of the Sacrament of Matrimony; and of Celibacy.
- XXV. Of Purgatory, Invocation, Veneration of Relics and Sacred Images, Indulgences, etc.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The Fourteenth Article of our Confession is a remarkable answer in form to this conglomerate of decrees. The Romish decrees were published later than the English Article. Were the decrees called out by the Article? Another sinister illustration! It is more likely that the English Confessors knew them in other forms.

This exhibit as a basis of comparison between the form and order of our Articles and the form of the *Symbola Romana* is of great value. It is such an argument for the historical point and pertinence of our Confession as is not graspable on first suggestion. One must, in order to fully comprehend it, give careful study to the intricate historical relations and bearings of the matter. Both Henry VIII. and Edward VI., as other Protestant princes, had representatives, more or less in secret service, present at Trent. The eyes of that Synod were, in turn, specially on England. Germany was counted lost, but England was in the balance. The news of Henry's death, in 1547, caused a rejoicing at Trent only less in intensity than that inspired by the news of Luther's death, which occurred the year before. The leaders of the English Reformation were the special dread of the Tridentine fathers; they knew almost as early and as accurately what went on, from session to session, in that body as did the Pope himself. This was the weight of historic events and concern that pressed out the oil of the Anglican Articles. It was not a matter of borrowing or reciprocity between the English and the German Reformers; it was the working out of a mighty scheme of Providence. The triangulations of that providence, to use a mathematical term, had Augsburg and Canterbury for base, and Trent for apex.

I have digressed from the main lead of this chapter to present this matter because it seemed more appropriate to discuss it here. But to return. Article Thirteen, "Of the Church," is the first of the anti-

Romish statements. It comes all but bodily from the Augsburg Confession, where the reading is:

The Church is the Congregation of the Saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the sacraments are properly administered.

To confirm them in their protest, the later English Confessors had before them this decretal of the papacy imposing personal confession upon its adherents:

I confess that the Holy Roman Apostolic and Catholic Church is the Mother and Mistress of Churches. I vow and swear also true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles, and the vicar of Jesus Christ.

Our Article sweeps these vain and blasphemous claims aside and shows the Church to be a family of faithful souls whose spiritual head is Jesus Christ, with no daysman or vicar between.

The Fourteenth Article, "Of Purgatory," we have seen to be an omnibus protest. It is an indictment of four counts against Rome—namely, the myth of purgatory, pardons, image and relic worship, and invocation of the saints. The Augsburg Articles are full of like denunciations, and the precedent from which our Article starts is evident. Although, as we have seen, the decrees of the Council of Trent on these matters were not officially published until after this tenet was written, the abuses had long been upheld by popes and bishops, and were in fact the chief occasion of the Reformation. The bull of Pius IV requires the adherent of Rome to unreservedly vow: "I do constantly hold that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are holpen by the suf-

frages of the faithful. Likewise that the saints reigning with Christ are to be honored and invoked, and that they offer up prayer to God for us, and that their relics are to be had in veneration."

Had the "*Decretum de Purgatorio, Doctrina de Invocatione, Veneratione et Reliquiis Sanctorum*" been in existence in 1552, we should no doubt have had a stronger word than our Article now exhibits, had that been possible.

Article Fifteen, "Of Speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People Understand," has no antecedent or correspondent in any of the principal German formularies. In Germany it was never counted as an issue. But in England, even after the Reformation had shown its strength, the Romanizing party had to be curbed at this point with an authoritative statement.<sup>2</sup> The Council of Trent in its twenty-second session declared that "whoever says the mass should be said in the language of the people is anathematized." That it is the policy of the Romish Church to use the Latin (a language long dead and unknown to the common people) in its public services is evident to any one attending to-day a chapel service in even the meanest village. This uniformity is indeed a boast of the papacy.

The first of the four paragraphs in the Sixteenth Article, "Of the Sacraments," is from the Augsburg Article carrying the title, "Of the Use of the Sacra-

---

<sup>2</sup>This Article is the only one which entirely disappears in the recension of the Twenty-Five Articles for the use of the Japanese Church.

ments," as may be seen from this extract from the German formulary:

The Sacraments were instituted not only as marks of a Christian profession amongst men, but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition toward us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them.

The second paragraph defends the two divinely instituted sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper), while the third paragraph is delivered directly against the claim of Rome that there are seven sacraments—five in addition to those two allowed by Protestants. The Council of Trent decreed, with accompanying anathemas, that "there are properly seven sacraments of the new law instituted by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and necessary to the salvation of mankind, though all be not necessary for every man; that is to say, baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders and matrimony, and that they confer grace."

The concluding paragraph of the Article is a pure Anglicanism, as wholesome and evangelical as it is strong.

The two Articles which follow (XVII. and XVIII.), "Of Baptism" and "Of the Lord's Supper," respectively, present the most familiar issues of Protestantism. Concerning the first, the papists teach that regeneration is secured in the act of baptism—that it is "the *instrumental* cause of justification." Concerning the eucharist, they teach that the bread and wine are the very body and blood of Christ, and that when the mass is said and consecrated a new sacrifice of the body

and blood of Christ is offered up for the remission of sins.

Our Article on Baptism agrees largely with the Augsburg member bearing the same title; it is, in fact, in some parts a verbal redaction from it, as the translation will make plain:

Baptism is a necessary ordinance; it is a means of grace, and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God and received into his favor.

The concluding part of the German Article had perhaps a more pronounced declaration of baptismal regeneration than had that part of the English Article which Mr. Wesley elided. The climacteric declaration of the Romish canon on baptism is: "If any one saith that baptism is not necessary to salvation, let him be anathema." While so much agreement may be traced between the German and the English Articles on baptism, our Article on the Lord's Supper is very far removed, both in spirit and in language, from the Augsburg tenet, entitled "Of the Lord's Supper." The Lutherans held from the beginning, and to-day hold, the doctrine of *consubstantiation*,<sup>3</sup> while the English-American Article comforts with the assurance

---

<sup>3</sup>*Consubstantiation*, Latin *cum*, with, and *substantia*, substance, by which is meant that the body of Christ is present with the forms of bread and wine and is partaken of by the communicant. It is proper, however, to say that the Lutherans have never accepted the term as describing their belief. This denial has been made by the greatest divines of their Church. Mosheim says the presence of Christ's body is real but incomprehensible; the body is not in the substance of the bread; but other Protestants have found it difficult to read this meaning out of the Lutheran Article.



that in the Supper "the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in a heavenly and spiritual manner."

The Church of Rome is as specific in its teachings concerning this sacrament as in its canon on baptism.

A bull of Pius IV., 1564, reads:

In the most holy eucharist is truly and substantially the body and blood, with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and there is made a conversion of the whole substance of the bread into his body, and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood, which conversion the Catholic Church calls transubstantiation.

Very closely related to the Article on the Lord's Supper is the one numbered XIX., "Of Both Kinds." The Augsburg Confession fully discusses the question of communion in both kinds; and although the language of our Article is Anglican throughout, it is plainly inspired from the common Lutheran source.

The Article is short, for the English Confessors felt that a word was sufficient. There was no issue over it, except the one with Rome. The Tridentine Confession requires each communicant to say:

I confess also that under one kind only, all and whole Christ, and the true sacrament is received.

The Twentieth Article, "Of the One Oblation of Christ Finished upon the Cross," is a protest against the abomination of the mass. It is based on the language of the Augsburg Confession, which in its particularly anti-Romish section discusses (in Art. III.) the whole subject of the mass. The point at which it coincides in language with our own Article is in this sentence—namely:

For the passion of Christ was an oblation and satisfaction not only for original guilt (*pro culpa originis*), but also for all other sins.

In the records of the twenty-second session of the Council of Trent appear these canons—viz.:

If any one saith that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or that Christ did not institute the apostles priests; or did not ordain that they and other priests should offer his own body and blood or that it is not a propitiatory sacrifice offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema.<sup>4</sup>

The cycle of the anti-Romish protests of our Confession is completed in the Twenty-First and Twenty-Second Articles, though the Twenty-Third, as enjoining loyalty to the rulers of the United States, is in the nature of a protest against the Romish doctrine of the temporal supremacy of the pope. The Twenty-First Article, "Of the Marriage of Ministers," agrees with the Augsburg Article entitled "The Celibacy of Priests." That Article says:

It is evident from the divine word and command that matrimony is lawful in ministers, and history teaches their practice was formerly conformed to this precept.

Although there is no literal copying from the German into the English formulary on this subject, the student cannot, in view of so many other cases in proof, doubt that the Augsburg Article was before the Edwardine Reformers when they wrote our Article.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>These sentences are literal translations, but are reduced from several consecutive canons.

<sup>5</sup>The Edwardine Article differs somewhat from the Eliz-

The Council of Trent did not imitate the Lutheran Reformers in writing a long canon on the celibacy of priests. It did indeed, in view no doubt of the Church's long contest with Henry VIII. of England over his divorce case, write both decrees and canons on the general subject of matrimony, but on the subject of sacerdotal celibacy it indited but a short canon. The paucity of any authority above its own dictum alone explains this caution. The canon reads:

If any one saith that clerics constituted in sacred order, or regulars who have solemnly professed chastity, are able to contract marriage, or that being contracted it is valid, notwithstanding the ecclesiastical law or vow; and that the contrary is nothing else than to condemn marriage; and that all who do not feel that they have the gift of chastity, even though they have made a vow thereof, may contract marriage: let him be anathema.

Of particular importance amongst all those liberties and privileges for which the Reformers "strove with Rome" was the right of the provincial or national churches to ordain their own rituals, ceremonies, and administrations. This of course Rome vehemently denied, for in the retention of the right to dictate these things was bound up her own lease of supremacy, not to say life. The rejection of the claim of Rome is embodied in our Twenty-Second Article, "Of the Rites

---

abethan, and more nearly resembles the Augsburgian language. It reads thus: "The state of single life is commanded to no man by the word of God. Bishops, priests, and deacons are not commanded to vow the state of single life without marriage, neither by God's law are they compelled to abstain from matrimony.

and Ceremonies of Churches." The demand is for liberty in these matters as national conditions or conscience may require. The Augsburg Confession has no Article title corresponding to it, though the idea is very fully discussed in the one headed "Of the Powers of the Church," which, it may be worth while to add, is the longest division of the entire Confession. It is an armory from which Protestant polemics have replenished their artillery since the beginning.

Covering the above question, the Tridentine Confession, established by Pius IV., requires this submission—viz.:

I also admit and receive the received rites of the Catholic Church; and all other things likewise do I undoubtedly receive and confess, which are delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and general councils, and especially the Holy Council of Trent; and withal I condemn, reject, and accuse all things that are contrary hereunto.

An unmistakable fact is read from these Tridentine records, and that is that the two great historic Confessions of Protestantism—the Lutheran and the Anglican—were not arbitrary writings, nor the output of scholastic dreamings, but rather the product of a wine press trodden of men who had reddened their garments with the blood of the vintage. For twenty years the Reformers of Wittenberg and Canterbury held the princes of Rome in terror in their guarded fortress of Trent. There they forced their opponents, through an intellectual prowess and a spiritual purpose they could not match, to write out, in a language that all men might read, the mysteries and cor-

rupting traditions of the Babylonian woman. This record stands to-day, and the handful of thunderbolts forged in righteous judgment against it have passed from hand to hand, and to-day is held, in the shape of these five and twenty Articles, in the fist of the Methodism of the West. Her only anathema is truth.

The remaining three Articles are of the nature of precepts or special statutes, especially the Twenty-Third, "Of the Ruler of the United States of America."<sup>6</sup> It was adopted by the General Conference in 1790 and takes the place of the English Article, "Of the Civil Magistrate," which is the charter of the English Church—it being a State Church—and in which it is declared that "the Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England." As we have before remarked, the American Article is to be accepted as a like, though an indirect, protest against the authority of the said Bishop of Rome.

The last two Articles (XXIV and XXV.) were aimed chiefly at the practices and doctrines of the English Anabaptists, and others who held with them, "that a rich man must sell all that he has or he cannot enter the kingdom of God," and that it is not lawful for a Christian man to swear or engage in war. The English Article XXXVIII. mentions the Anabaptists—"certain" of the sect—by name. The offensiveness of

---

<sup>6</sup>A constitutional amendment is now pending before the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, to change the reading of this Article to terms of more general significance. It is doubtful if an article of this character should be in the Confession at all. It is a statute rather than a tenet.

the teachings against which they were aimed was great ; and though the specific offense may have ceased, the spirit of the heresy, especially that condemned in the last Article, is alive to-day in America to an extent that makes the writing seem a prophecy. An important—an even gigantic—struggle of the not distant future, not on the part of the State only. but of the Church also, is to be with socialism, under the guise of economics.



**DOCTRINAL INCLUSIONS.**



When false doctrines were introduced into the Church, it was deemed expedient to go more into detail, so as to affirm the true doctrines in opposition to the false.—*Dr. T. O. Summers.*

The principle of the Arminian type of doctrine was the universality of the benefit of the atonement and the restored freedom of the human will. The Wesleyan Methodists, however, rejected the teaching of the immediate successors of Arminius, who were tinged with Socinianism and rationalism, and "Wesleyans," as Pope says, "were Arminians as opposed to Calvinists, but in no other sense."—*Bishop John F. Hurst, "History of Methodism."*

No dishonoring uncertainty has characterized the Confession of the Church of God from the days of the apostles to the present. Through storm and tumult and change, in the face of skepticism, and despite opposition, with unfaltering utterance she has reiterated the great facts: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only-begotten Son our Lord."—*Bishop Wilson, "Witnesses to Christ."*

## CHAPTER VI.

### *DOCTRINAL INCLUSIONS.*

Not a few critics have expressed, in one way or another, the conviction that the Articles of Religion are not as comprehensive of subject-matter, nor as full in detail, as could be wished. To a very limited extent this may be admitted, and I, for one, have favored an inquiry into the supposed lack. Not that I would see effervescent new wine put into old bottles, or modern damask sewed upon ancient cloth of gold; but rather, as has already been explained, that the teachings of our authoritative homilies and manuals might be reduced to a convenient, practical, and flexible writing that could be made to answer seasonably to our advancing theological interpretations. Such a writing, begun and completed without circumstance or betrayal of prophetic consciousness, might, in the course of ripening years, through the law of selection and survival, get fragments of itself into a formulary. What matter if it did not, so it served well its generation?

But we must consider even inquiry in this direction as highly experimental, and the question of lack which it suggests as of doubtful point. We should also consider the favorable outcome of this inquiry, even on the basis of our own suggestion, as of no great utility since we have the same results in other forms. As one

studies the Articles both in their historical relations and as to their present availability the impression of lack is steadily diminished. Either in direct affirmation or implication they fairly cover the theological field. What is lost in the lack of detail is gained in strong, terse, affirmative historical statements approved by time and justified in the results attending the ministry of the Church whose confession they are. These Articles were meant to complete with our standard books the cycle of Methodist doctrines. That they do this in a satisfactory way is our unyielding conviction—a conviction which has grown as we have applied to them the severest tests of history and theology. The present chapter is to be devoted to an argument in proof of this assumption.

There is a matter in chief—the one which relates to the doctrinal school to which these Articles belong—that I choose to discuss briefly at this point. The Confession is Arminian. This I shall be able to establish in the treatment of each Article in its place. It is undesirable here to enter into a hearing of historical evidence. That would reopen the whole question of the doctrinal situation in England at the time of the writing of the Edwardine Articles. To this I shall give an entire chapter as a conclusion of this volume. It is enough now to inquire into the purpose of Mr. Wesley's recension of the Elizabethan Confession.

We have already considered the certain future method of writing confessions by a process of elimination. Whether the infralapsarian Article of the Anglican Confession, "Of Predestination and Election," be Augustinian, Zwinglian, or Calvinistic is not material at

this point. It is anti-Arminian, and Mr. Wesley, being fully committed to the Arminian view, elided it, with whatever else in the Confession lent color, in his judgment, to an unfriendly view. Thus the Confession became an Arminian statement,<sup>1</sup> fitting meetly and minutely to the body of doctrines contained in the purely Wesleyan writings. I shall be able, at the proper place, to show not only the source of the infralapsarian Article of the Anglican formulary, but also that it was a graft upon the body of tenets that had little or nothing in common with it, so that its excision removed its sap and fruit from the tree. This was Mr Wesley's view of his own action.<sup>2</sup> The result was much more momentous and significant than if a new writing had been entered upon. It is not thinkable that such a writing could have been attempted. The end was one wrought by providence and history.

### I. THE DOCTRINE OF GOD.

The theism of the Twenty-Five Articles is full and complete. We have heretofore explored the sources

---

<sup>1</sup>"The Calvinistic portions of this Article were stricken out *on purpose to render it Arminian.*" (A. T. Bledsoe.)

"By these omissions and changes all traces of Calvinism, Romanism, and ritualism were eliminated. The Articles of Religion are therefore specially and strictly Arminian in all points which distinguish evangelical Arminianism from Calvinism." (Bishop Harris.)

<sup>2</sup>"Some of the others were merely changed in phraseology or in unimportant points, but others to such an extent as to convey a meaning radically different; as, for instance, in the Twelfth Article justification is substituted for baptism." ("History of Methodism," J. M. Buckley, Vol. I., page 297.)

in the early Christian and Protestant formularies from which the statements embodying the doctrine were taken. In weighing and pondering them the mind finds rest. To the present conviction which they beget is added the testimony of many ages of the past that accepted them in the faith of to-day. The assumption is also a confident one that ages to come will receive them in the same terms, counting it a gain to do so. If there had been scholastic reservations lingering in these writings, there has been ample time for them to sift out. Coeval constitutions and codes that held together political fabrics have perished, but these simple formulas live because they are inhabited of truth that is eternal.

The first Article declares the existence, eternity, pure spirithood, power, and goodness of God, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible. We have used the term "theism" advisedly; this is the God idea, the conception of the incorporeal, indivisible unity of the Godhead. Not the Father, not the Son, not the Holy Ghost, but the Three in *One*. This is the *Jehovah* of the Old Testament, the *Theos* of the New. whom no man hath seen at any time, but who is revealed of the Son.

The Confession carries no separate tenet on the Fatherhood, in this following the precedent of the oldest symbols. The manifestation of the First Person of the Deity is through the other Two. Such also is the method observed in Scripture. The life, ministry, and death of Jesus Christ are the perfect revelation of the Father, and the only one vouchsafed us in the Scriptures. Indeed, there could be none other. What

Christ was, God the Father is. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

An apparently proper criticism has sometimes been passed upon the heading of the First Article as not describing its contents. The Article indeed carries the matter of two separate statements—namely, one of the Godhead and another of the Trinity—but the apostolic brevity of the two statements forced them into a grammatical unity. The reason for the exclusive title, "Of Faith in the Holy Trinity," is that the Article follows not only the spirit, but the letter, of the Nicene Confession. The business of the council of Nicea was to defend the doctrine of the Trinity against the attacks of the Arian heretics. The integrity of the whole doctrine of the Godhead was held to be involved in the Trinitarian Creed. Such is the persistence of history that it shows itself in the title of the first of the English Articles. This Article affirms the Trinity in the equality and unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Article IV completes the doctrine in declaring that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and from the Son.

## II. CHRISTOLOGY.

The Christology of the Confession is, like the doctrine of the Godhead, complete. The Incarnation, the virgin birth, the two natures (human and divine)—completing, in their everlasting and inseparable unity, one Person, "whereof is one Christ, very God and very man"—are fully declared.

We are not purposing at this juncture to detail the teachings of each particular Article of the Confession,

but rather to indicate in a general way the doctrinal content of the whole. But as these writings have sometimes been depreciated and discounted at this point, I cannot refrain from emphasizing the way in which Christ is centered in them. This is that quality in any form of religious teaching which the theologians describe as Christocentric. It shows the use to which these Articles may be put, and their office as a defense of the evangelical doctrines. Far more than the half of these Articles are built up around the doctrine of the divinity, ministry, and sacrifice of our Lord. Dr Nicoll, in his admirable treatise, "The Church's One Foundation," has this fine, strong statement: "The controversy about Christ is essentially a controversy about facts. Christianity is not a sentiment, not a philosophy, not even a historical system, but a historical religion." The same author quotes from Westcott this saying: "Christ the Word, the Son of God, is himself the Gospel. The Incarnation, the Nativity, the Transfiguration, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension are the final and absolute revelation to man of God's nature and will." The Christology of the Twenty-Five Articles is indisputably scriptural. There is therein an echo of "the absolute revelation." The use of these Articles is the use of the Flemish dykes that have for ages divided between destructive seas and the life of a pleasant land.

### III. SOTERIOLOGY.

Article II. of the Confession contains not only a statement of the Christological doctrines of the New Testament, but concludes with a statement of objective

soteriology. Soteriology (from the Greek *Soter*, "Saviour") is the doctrine of salvation. This statement is also in the language of the most ancient creeds, and answers to the terms of the divine record. Christ "truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried" to secure and complete our salvation, "to reconcile the Father unto us"—not that he did not also die to reconcile us to the Father, but the lesser term is logically contained in the greater.

The doctrine is completely summed up in the final statement: "And to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men." For our salvation:

1. Christ lived and suffered. The bulk of the evangel is given in this testimony.

2. He "was crucified, dead, and buried." These words cover the great sacrificial tragedy of the atonement as detailed in marvelous simplicity and power in the Scriptures.

The Twentieth Article (in the anti-Romish section) contains another succinct statement of soteriology: "The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone."

We have elsewhere expressed a view concerning the impertinency of a tenet on the origin of sin—a subject, at all venture, too occult for human statement—but this reflection could not apply to the term as used in these Articles. Whatever his view of its *guilt*, who would be willing to forego active faith concerning



a divine provision for remedying that corruption of human nature whereof we are all partakers?<sup>3</sup>

The doctrinal contents of Article III. may well be catalogued under this head. Since the Scriptures declare that Jesus "rose again for our justification," his resurrection and ascension are to be counted as the completion of our salvation. But the Article contains a clause which embodies the doctrine of eschatology, or discourse about the last things—namely, the resurrection and final judgment of "all men at the last day."

The terms expounding the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ are most comprehensive. It is declared to have been a bodily resurrection—"he took his own body." Moreover, it was complete in "all that appertained to the perfection of man's nature." With his body he ascended and sitteth. There is nothing which even faith would require to be added.

Objection has been made that more was not written concerning the resurrection of man. Again it is sufficient to answer that the lesser term is contained in the greater. The resurrection of believers, as a doctrine, was never in question in the Christian Church. It is in the Creed and in the Scriptures; it is not matter for the more extended formulary.

#### IV THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

The Confession gives two Articles (V and VI.) to the doctrine relating to the Holy Scriptures. The first of these Articles declares the complete divine au-

---

<sup>3</sup>See page 156.

thority, the inerrancy, and sufficiency of the Old and the New Testaments. It also declares for the ancient, orthodox canon, and rejects the apocryphal books. The Second Article holds that the Old Testament is not contrary to the New, and that it, in the spirit of the New, offered salvation to the fathers through Christ. These two Articles hold in themselves the terms of a final and absolute theology. One could not wish them written otherwise than they are.

## V ANTHROPOLOGICAL DOCTRINES.

Anthropological doctrines are those which define the nature, state, and powers of man as he is related to the grace of God revealed in the gospel. As theology proper is the doctrine of God, so anthropology is the doctrine of man. The Confession brings out these doctrines so far as they have been in serious dispute in the Church.

### *I. Original Sin, Corruption of Nature, or Depravity*

The Seventh Article teaches "the corruption of the nature of every man" through Adam's sin. The consequence of this "corruption" is, that every man is by nature "inclined to evil, and that continually." This inclination is not guilt, but when consented to and followed becomes such. The Methodist Church does not teach the doctrine of transmitted guilt, but of transmitted corruption only. This is one with the now better understood doctrine of heredity. The atonement of Jesus Christ is the corrective of, and the perfect remedy for, this corruption; but Christ had been Christ to the world had the world known no sin. The

teaching of the Article in these matters should be grammatically clear to all, but there have been and still are those who have been confused by the title "of original or birth sin." "Is not this title," they ask, "an admission that heredity or transmitted depravity is sin?" It should be enough to relieve this confusion to say that this title is a historic one, and perhaps is not improperly retained to designate a subject that would not be recognizable under another title. It did well enough as the heading of the Anglican Article which carried considerably more than a modicum of Augustinianism. But, as in the case of the tenet on "Sin after Justification," this Article became under Mr. Wesley's recension Arminian and anti-Augustinian. (It was never Calvinistic, as some have contended.) This was unquestionably Mr. Wesley's own view of the effect of his abridgment, and was in keeping with his latest and maturest conclusions on the subject of original sin, reached at least as early as 1783, and set forth in a sermon preached by him in 1785.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. *Free Will.*

The Eighth Article very properly leaves the metaphysical doctrine of the human will untouched, but asserts that our wills must be helped by divine grace in order to bring forth works "pleasant and acceptable unto God." It is the utmost that a dogmatic tenet should attempt.

---

<sup>4</sup>See "Christian Theology," by A. T. Bledsoe, D.D., *Southern Review*, October, 1876.

### 3. *Justification.*

The Ninth Article of the Confession, though brief, is the most satisfactory setting of the battle cry of the Reformation to be found in the creeds of Christendom. It covers those aspects of the doctrine which have been at issue. It is graspable, like its Pauline original. "wholesome and very full of comfort." "We are justified by faith only." Some have asked, in the spirit which misapprehends the function of a confession, why we have no separate Article on Regeneration. Justification necessitates regeneration. "But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." (1 Cor. vi. 11.) The doctrine of the new birth was never dogmatically an issue in the great controversial era of Christianity. Protestantism and Romanism were nearer together here than on most other points, though unfortunately the common ground was baptismal regeneration. Nevertheless, by the complete elimination of the *ex opere operato* from the English tenet on "Baptism," we have not only a sound Arminian Article (XVII.) on that sacrament, but also a distinct, emphatic declaration of the doctrine of regeneration, or the new birth.

### 4. *Good Works.*

A cognate issue of Protestantism—in fact, one which was vitally related to the abuse of indulgences, which were the occasion of the Reformation—was the doctrine of good works. Our Confession treats the subject briefly and luminously. Good works are declared to be pleasing and acceptable to God, but are not the ground of salvation.

*5. Works of Supererogation.*

The excess of "good works" alleged in the Romish doctrine of supererogation to be accumulated by the lives of saints was indeed the dogma on which the theory of indulgences rested. Our Confession, in common with its Protestant antecedents, denies the possibility of such an excess of good works, or indeed of passing beyond the letter of obedience in keeping the commandment.

*6. Apostasy and Restoration.*

The possibility of apostasy is declared, but restoring grace is preached with equal certainty. Believers may fall into sin after receiving the Holy Ghost, but forgiveness is not to be denied to those who truly repent. (See Article XII.)

## VI. DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH.

The doctrine concerning the Church set forth in the Confession, though briefly stated, is clear, affirmative, and comprehensive of those functions given of the Lord to it—namely, the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments and ordinances of Christ. This Article (Article XIII.), taken in connection with the office for the reception of members, completes the ideal of the Church of God—an organization for the "promotion of his worship and the due administration of his word and ordinances, the edification of believers, and the conversion of the world."

In the next chapter I shall more fully treat the complement of the ideal of the Church contained in the

ritual. The Methodist doctrine of the Church is full, complete, and the statement is put where it can be most frequently emphasized and reiterated—namely, in the office for the reception of members.

## VII. THE SACRAMENTS.

The teaching of these Articles on the subject of the sacraments, in addition to being a protest against the sacerdotal superstitions of Rome, are scriptural, complete, and expressed in such language as may well endure through the ages. The pseudo-sacraments of the Romish Church are rejected. The true sacraments are two in number—namely, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have before noted the elision of certain Augustinian clauses from the English Article on Baptism. The Article on the Lord's Supper is the same as the English Article throughout.

## VIII. SPECIAL PROTESTS AGAINST ROME.

Like those of the Lutheran and the Anglican Confessions, a considerable number of our Articles are given to special protests against Rome. Why this is so we have to some extent already pointed out, but shall give the matter further attention later on. These Articles of special protest are: Fourteen, Nineteen, Twenty, Twenty-One, Twenty-Two, and parts of Sixteen and Eighteen. They strike at the heart of those superstitions and abuses which once held the Christian world in thrall, and which are the guarantee of Rome's continued power over millions. These protests are against:

1. The doctrine of Purgatory—a mythical halfway

house between time and eternity, in which place it is affirmed the mass, indulgences, and the merits of saints help the souls not meet for heaven. With the condemnation of this doctrine goes that of the abuses it fosters—the worshiping of relics and images and the invocation of saints.

2. The false sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction.

3. Transubstantiation—that is, the sacerdotal claim of Rome that its priests by consecration of the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper actually change them into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. (Article XVIII.)

4. "Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Do Not Understand"—that is, specifically in using the Latin (a dead language) in every congregation, instead of the mother tongue of the people who are being ministered to. (Article XV )

5. "Of Both Kinds"—that is, the rule of Rome which in the eucharist gives only the bread to the people, the priest drinking the wine vicariously for the laity. (Article XIX.)

6. The Mass. In the mass the papists claim that Christ is offered up afresh, a sacrifice, as on the cross. The mass is held to be especially helpful to the souls in Purgatory. (Article XX.)

7. Enforced Celibacy. The Romish doctrine of the necessary celibacy of the clergy is held to be contrary both to the letter and spirit of the New Testament, and contrary to nature. It has been one of the most fruitful sources of degradation of public morals in Romish countries. (Article XXI.)

8. Rites, Ceremonies, etc. The papists claim that the Bishop of Rome is the head of Christendom, and that no rites, ceremonies, or rules for the Church can be made except by him or those who answer to his authority. Our Confession denies this, and asserts that each Church is competent to order these things, so that nothing be contrary to the word of God. (Article XX.)

#### IX. OTHER INCLUSIONS.

In addition to the doctrines to which separate tenets are devoted, the following also find emphasis, not in as complete a way as some might think desirable, but with sufficient detail to fix them as symbols and standards of belief.

1. The ministry of the Holy Ghost is affirmed in the Twelfth Article in such a way as to show the Church's belief that the subjective work which renews the soul and perfects the sign of justification is wrought by the Spirit of God. Extended statements might be written, and yet the doctrine be no more securely lodged. Witness the terse, tense forms of the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The doctrine of subjective soteriology, or particularly the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit, has been developed within the era of Protestantism. It does not belong to dogmatic confessions, but it is fully expounded in our standard homilies, and is plainly read in the Word of God.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>"While the Wesleyan doctrines of assurance and sanctification, or, as Wesley chose to call the latter, Christian Perfection, are not in the Articles of Religion, except inferentially, because they were so clearly scriptural and taught in the



2. The doctrine of preventing grace is very fully taught in the Eighth Article. Without "the grace of God preventing us," we can have no "good will," nor can we exercise that good will without the grace of God "working with us."

3. Antinomianism, or the doctrine of life without the moral commandments, is condemned in Articles Six and Twelve. The sin against the Holy Ghost is also in the Twelfth Article as nearly defined as is possible from the brief Scripture reference to it.

4. The truth of the life everlasting is categorically affirmed in Article Six as a teaching of both the Old and the New Testaments.

5. Christian fellowship and brotherly love are declared to be the spiritual concomitant of the Lord's Supper.

#### X. CHRISTIAN ETHICS.

It has been fully explained how Article XXIII. of the Confession came to have its place. It was added to the Twenty-Four Articles of Mr. Wesley's recension to declare loyal assent to the new American government, and be a perpetual denial of the Romish claim of temporal supremacy. Article Twenty-Four is a denial of the correctness of the doctrines of communistic socialism, while the last Article sets a high ideal

---

Greek, Roman, and Protestant Churches and by the great divines of the age, yet Mr. Wesley had amplified them in the Large Minutes; and as they were a part of his system, he did not specially need to mention them." ("Manual of Methodist Episcopal Church History," George L. Curtiss, M.D., D.D.)

for the Christian man's oath, and allows his amenity to the civil law when his oath is demanded in causes of justice and truth.

These Articles are such as relate Methodism in a most practical way to this present age of practical doings and ideals. Indeed, the time may not be distant when our Twenty-Fourth Article will seem a prophecy and prove an anchor chain to the Church in social storms.



# GENERAL EXPOSITION

## I. THE GODHEAD, CHRIST, AND SALVATION.

Christ's life our code, his cross our creed,  
Our common, glad confession be.

—*Methodist Hymnal.*

All religious faith is faith in God, and all knowledge derived from faith is knowledge of God.—*Julius Kaftan, D.D.*

Nor have the Methodists of this country fully appreciated the value of the Articles bequeathed to them by John Wesley; otherwise they would not have allowed such fearful ignorance to prevail on the subject.—*Albert Taylor Bledsoe, LL.D.*

We hold it the part of wisdom and the dictate of the spirit of Methodism to think first and most of the leadings of the Spirit of God, to hold all things superficial and formal in subordination, to keep these at the minimum for effective work, to guard the fundamentals with unwavering loyalty, to leave open all possible avenues where the Spirit may wish to lead us, and to trust the great Head of the Church to guide us personally into all truth and to be with us always.—*Rev. Levi Gilbert, D.D.*

## CHAPTER VII.

### *GENERAL EXPOSITION.*

#### I. THE GODHEAD, CHRIST, AND THE HOLY GHOST.

THE first four of the Articles belong in a group to themselves. They treat of the Godhead, and particularly expound the doctrine of the Trinity and the saving work of Jesus Christ, giving emphasis to the doctrine of his resurrection in a separate Article. These four Articles, as we have seen, date back in their substance and essential terms to a great antiquity. The words have been chastened by a long usage and an oft recension until they appear packed together like jewels in a casket. It would be difficult indeed to make words express more and yet retain their individual and distinctive value.

#### ARTICLE I.

##### OF FAITH IN THE HOLY TRINITY.

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. And in [the] unity of this Godhead there are three Persons of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

With slight verbal changes this Article appears here as in the Anglican Confession. It consists of two parts. The first part is a statement of the truth of

the being, nature, perfection, and Creatorship of God. The second part is an affirmation of the orthodox doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Bishop Burnet remarks that it is proper that the tenet of faith in the Godhead should appear first in a Confession, for the reason that it is the doctrine out of which all other doctrines grow. Men, however, in correct thinking begin with that in which the idea of God is contained—namely, their own consciousness—but it is true that the doctrine of God is the first and the noblest of all doctrines. The Twenty-Five Articles are not a systematic theology, but a historical writing which briefly describes the *challenged beliefs* of the true Church in all ages and its *protests* against heresies and superstitions. The order in which they stand exactly describes the history of the Christian polemics to which they relate. “The number is that of a man,” and not of a vision or a studied statement.

1. “There is but one living and true God.” This is Jehovah; not the Father only, but the Son and the Holy Ghost—one. “One God” was the Church’s early protest against the polytheism of the classic peoples—Greeks, Romans, and Asiatics—with whom it earliest met. This belief in one God was its inheritance from Judaism. “A living God” was its destructive cry against the “dumb idols” of the heathen. “The true God” was the exaltation of Jehovah into that lonely, glorious isolation of reverent thought whereunto no other suggestion of deity or supremacy might approach.

2. “Everlasting, without body or parts.” The religion and the philosophical thought of Greece and

Rome, which were the early contestants of Christianity, admitted that the age of the Olympian gods was to end. "Great Pan is dead!" was a cry which shivered from "Calpe unto Caucasus." At such a time Christianity boldly declared its faith in the endless life and reign of Jehovah. Nor was it slow to ascribe a reason for this faith. It was cited in the creed of the spirithood of the "living and true God"—God "without body or parts." The Anglican Article adds "or passions." The fanciful gods of the classic heathen were *anthropomorphic*—that is, they were supposed to have bodies—hands, feet, taste, appetites, and passions—like men. The true God is a Spirit, pure, imponderable—a thought which overwhelms, as does that of immeasurable space.

3. "Of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness." These are the nature and attributes of Jehovah—not all, but affirmative of all; a part standing for the whole. "Infinite power" awes into reverence every thought, answers every doubt, and confirms the faith of the believer. "Infinite power" is power everywhere—power in the eternal past, power in the eternal future, power absolute, undivided.

4. "Of infinite wisdom." There is no past or future in God's knowledge, but an eternal present; there are no qualifications or limitations of his knowledge, but it is absolute, everywhere, always. He does not choose but know all things, past and present; he could not choose to be ignorant. It is his nature to know. The scholastic theology which for its own use or defense once dealt in the subtlety as to whether God chose to foreknow or not to foreknow this or that future event



did but juggle with truth and dishonored the Most High.

5. "Of infinite goodness." There is no moral attribute, thinkable or unthinkable, that is not involved in the goodness of God. "*Infinite* goodness!" Volumes could not express more! Love, mercy, long-suffering, gentleness, kindness—"the glorious gospel of the blessed God"—are wrapped up in that matchless phrase. The value of a creed is in that conciseness which does not sacrifice the necessary and particular affirmation. In the Christian household there has never been a question of the mercy of God. The evangel abounds with its story. "His mercy endureth forever." Why beat the scriptural ingots into foil and film for a confession? The word suffices—he is infinitely good. By this token let this symbol be tried.

6. "The Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible." According to pagan faiths, the world was made by chance or was the work of contending and antagonistic spirits, the gods themselves springing from the earth, sea, or air. But the Church in its Confession avows its belief that all worlds, all heights and depths were created by the "one living and true God," and that he continually preserves his work through the exercise of "infinite power." The doctrine of the Creatorship is absolute. A personal God planned, supervised, and executed the work of creation. The fact that he is a God of law, and that the theory of this law may be extended to include the most modern terms of evolution and biology, only enhances the doctrine of an intelligent Personality in creation. The master mechanic who oversees a great

machine shop with a thousand lathes, drills, and hammers is a greater intelligence than the tinker who makes rude thills and plowshares for the peasantry

7. "In [the] unity of this Godhead there are three Persons." This is the Trinity. The parts of this Article up to this point are the echo of the Church's early contest with pagan idolatry. From this point to the end it is the sum of the Church's contest with the first great heresy within its own body. That heresy was Arianism, which denied the divinity of the Son, and therefore the truth of the Trinity.<sup>1</sup> The Scriptures treat the Trinity as they do the existence of God. It is part of the great First Truth, and is purely a matter of faith. The facts which make both the existence of God and the Trinity a necessity are divinely revealed. The putting of these facts into a unity is *faith*. The term "Trinity" refers to the three Persons in their separate beings and office; "unity" refers to the identity of their substance.

8. "Of one substance, power, and eternity" This phrase means that the three Persons are equally God, each "very and eternal God"—"God of God," as in the Athanasian Creed. The Father has all power, the Son has all power, the Holy Ghost has all power. The Father always was, the Son always was, the Holy Ghost always was, and each shall always be.

9. "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The

---

<sup>1</sup>Frequent observations have been indulged on the lack of pertinency in the title of the First Article. It is due to the overtowering importance of the Arian controversy in the Nicene Age. The title testifies to the antiquity of the Article.

Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, the Holy Ghost is not the Son; he is not the Father. Each Person is complete, and yet the three make one Nature and Being in the Godhead. An eternal *Father* necessitates an eternal *Son*, and this eternal relation necessitates the eternal *procession* of the Holy Ghost. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between eternal *begetting* and eternal *proceeding*. The one relation is that of *generation*, the other, that of *communion*.

## ARTICLE II.

### OF THE WORD OR SON OF GOD WHO WAS MADE VERY MAN.

The Son who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures—that is to say, the Godhead and Manhood—were joined together in one person never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for actual sins of men.

This is the Article of the Incarnation. The Second Person of the Trinity is the Son—*the only-begotten* of the Father in a double sense, as God and as Man. His divine Sonship is eternally in the nature of the Father; his human Sonship came through a miracle of the Holy Ghost.

All the Creed critics divide this Article into three parts: (1) That which treats of the divine nature of Christ; (2) that which treats of his Incarnation; and (3) that which treats of his atoning sufferings and death.

1. "Of one substance with the Father" This is the *homoousian* (of the *same* substance) of the Nicene Confessors as against the *homoiousian* (of *like* substance) of the Arian heretics. The Arians and semi-Arians (the *Eusebians*) were willing to admit the doctrine of a similar substance in Jesus Christ, but not the doctrine of the same substance, with the Father. But the orthodox party drove the test to the uttermost, and so the symbol stands—*homoousion*. Bishop Burnet explains that another reason why all confessions have employed this form is that it "was found that an equivocation was used in all other forms except this." This language has taken on a meaning all but inspired, and will no doubt endure through the ages.

2. "Took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin." Christianity is a religion of facts and of consequent experiences. It begins in the fact of the Incarnation. That the Incarnation was part of the eternal plan does not admit of the shadow of doubt. Not sin alone was the cause of Christ's coming and humiliation. Holiness and truth were a higher cause. The ultimate proof of his divinity is found in his humanity. Only divinity could have wrought the marvel of the Incarnation. It is the completion and bond of the universe. All worlds were, and continue to be, affected by it. A human heart—the Christ heart—is the center of the created universe. The human Christ was born out of the course of nature. He had a human mother, but his paternity was in the Holy Ghost. This is *where* and *how* the divine and the human natures were "joined together in one person." With-

out the recognition of these stupendous facts, so lucidly set forth in this Confession, there is no true conception of Christianity.

3. "Never to be divided." Not only was the Incarnation in the mind and plan of God from eternity past, but it is in the divine plan for the eternities to be. "Whereof is one Christ, very God and very man." The Christ is human in the absolute sense, as he is divine in the absolute sense. The mystery of the Incarnation cannot be even remotely apprehended until we get a wide view of God's purpose in humanity. The human Christ is the revelation of God; the divine Christ is the revelation of humanity. "This is the true God and eternal life."

4. "Who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried." The sufferings of Christ were not accidental; they were necessary—eternally necessary. Sufferings—not in this or that form—but as a stress, a trial, the perfecting of fire, the *παθημάτων* of the gospel.<sup>2</sup> They were the strokes which welded the human and the divine into a perfect unity; they were the travail through which sons and daughters were begotten unto God. The *death* of Jesus Christ was of the divine plan and foreknowledge, the *crucifixion*—that is, the manner and method of his death—was of the devising of human truculence and hate.

5. "*To reconcile his Father to us.*" There has been no little objection to this phrase as being an inadequate statement of the atonement of reconciliation. The objection is not well taken. God is the enemy of

---

<sup>2</sup>See Hebrews ii. 10.

sin,<sup>3</sup> and the sinner is under his displeasure. But, displeased though he is, his "infinite goodness" yearns after the rebel. The death of Christ makes that goodness *effective, available*. It opens the way; it moves the sinner to seek the Father. The Father accepts that approach. That is reconciliation. But it is argued that Christ died to reconcile *us* to the Father. True; but that reconciliation, as observed before, is the lesser term and is contained in the greater. Our reconciliation to God becomes possible only because he was long ago in the eternity of the human Christhood reconciled to us, and this is the realm in which the Confession deals with it. The Father's reconciliation is eternal; ours is in time. The discovery that the Father is already reconciled completes our own reconciliation. The lesser is but the heart-born acceptance of the greater. The confession is well written in this.<sup>4</sup>

6. "To be a sacrifice not only for original guilt but also for actual sins of men." Christ was a sacrifice in the true sense. He gave his life; he "gave himself

---

<sup>3</sup>"Anselm rightly saw, at the outset, that if there existed a necessity for the incarnation, and for such sufferings as those to which the Son of God submitted, that man's salvation should be secured, this necessity must lie, where Scripture already places it, in the nature of sin as wrong done to God, and in the principles of the divine character which unchangeably regulate God in his treatment of sin." (Professor Orr.)

<sup>4</sup>On this point the Augsburg Confession says in the Twentieth Article: "Now he who knows the Father is reconciled to him through the Son, possesses a true acquaintance with God, confides in his providence, and calls upon his name."

up." "His hour" was the day when men willfully and of their own judgment made him a sacrifice in the name of their heaven-given law—a law which anciently and fundamentally demanded a sacrifice. The Son of Mary died under that law, humanly, not divinely, administered. In this the death of Christ not only fulfilled the sacerdotal idea of a *sacrifice* but the historical idea as well. "For original guilt." No matter what views we may hold concerning the doctrine of "original sin," the Scriptures force on us the idea of a *pervasive*, a *racial* corruption. The race is ruined, wasted, depraved through sin. In some way and to some degree each member of the race shares the consequence of this. It cannot be doubted or reasoned away. It is forever present, except grace remove it. And grace does remove it, contravene it, destroy it. This inheritance or participation in the general corruption is the root of "actual sins of men." The root and growth being common, the remedy is common. The grace that forgives is the grace that purifies.

### ARTICLE III.

#### OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

Christ did truly rise again from the dead and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

This Article dates back to primitive Christianity. It is the answer to the scoffers, atheists, and materialists of the first four centuries.

1. "His body." The body with which Christ left

the sepulcher of Joseph was the one which was hanged upon the cross. I will not broach the mystery of the spiritual body. It is enough that the eleven and above "five hundred" others who saw him after the resurrection knew it to be the same body. Both the canonical record of the resurrection and the fundamentals of science on which any series of facts rest, and by which they may be proven, demand that the risen body of Jesus be shown to be the same as the one laid in the sepulcher by Joseph and Nicodemus. It was the same, and this the Confession declares with an emphasis that only madness would attempt to reason away. The resurrection is not proven until this is proven, nor is it accepted until this is accepted.

2. "Appertaining to the perfection of man's nature." Those who saw the Risen Form saw what redeemed men will be in the life beyond—aye, it may be ultimately with the life *here*. "Wherewith he ascended." Thus this Confession appropriates the living human Christ. He is now alive! He has gone up in triumph! "And there sitteth." Christ is not a reminiscence, but "the King eternal, invisible"—the enthroned Life.

3. "Until he return to judge all men." The resurrection of men is involved in the rising of Jesus. There is no need for a separate tenet. Because he rose, we shall rise also. The judgment is here in the office of the Christ. What need of another declaration of it? "All men." All shall rise—all shall be judged. What need of an article on heaven? on hell? The greater contains the lesser. Belief in the resurrection of Christ is the corner stone of faith and creed. To



doubt is to reject the truth; to deny it is to put one's self beyond the Christian pale.

4. "At the last day." That last day should be the most potent reality in the world of our thoughts. It is a tremendous something in the' Confession—those three meaningful words. It comes. It will be the summing up of all realities. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the revelation to men of the life and power of God. It was natural that he should rise. The resurrection was but a stage of his endless life. He could not be holden of death. Those who believe on him receive the resurrection power into themselves. They cannot die. Since the Crucified rose this has been a new world, a new power has infolded it; a new life has been regnant in it.

#### ARTICLE IV.

##### OF THE HOLY GHOST.

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

The nature and relations of the Holy Ghost were considered under the First Article; but the phrase, "proceeding from the Father and the Son," must claim attention here. It is the Athanasian formula, and grew out of the reprobation of the denial of the Deity of the Son by the Arians. They allowed the procession of the Spirit from the Father, but not from the Son. The Greek Creed of to-day disallows the "*Filioque*" (Latin, "*and the Son*"). These "forms of sound words" were fought for through the ages and handed

down to us a precious inheritance. Acceptance of them puts us in the succession of the defenders of the faith.

The work of the Holy Ghost is referred to in other parts of the Confession, this particular part being devoted wholly to the statement of the orthodox doctrine of the being and nature of the third Person of the Trinity. The gift of the Holy Ghost to men is the communication to them of the *consciousness* of God, as the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus was the revelation to men of the *life* of God. This is the office which makes available the fullness of the Life revealed in the Son.



# GENERAL EXPOSITION.

## II. THE CANONICITY AND SUFFICIENCY OF HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Bring not human reasonings and syllogisms: I rely on Scripture.—*Theodoret.*

The new element in the reforming principle consists in marking off Holy Scripture from ecclesiastical tradition, and setting the former above the latter. It consists in the rule expressed by Luther in the Smalcald Articles: "*Ut Verbum Dei condat Articulos fidei et praeterea nervo, ne angelus quidem.*"—*Julius Kaftan, D.D.*

It is God who speaks to us there, but it is also man; it is man, but it is also God. Admirable Word of God! it has been made man in its own way, as the Eternal Word was! God has made it come down to us full of grace and truth, like unto our own words in all things, yet without error.—*Gaussen.*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED).*

#### II. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, THEIR CANONICITY AND SUFFICIENCY.

CHRISTIANITY is founded on the words of Christ, and these are contained in the canonical Scriptures. The Scriptures have been the means of the preservation of the Christian religion, as they have been the means by which the Spirit has entered into and inhabited the individual lives of men. The Bible was expressly the incitant and the inspiration of Protestantism, which as a system claims to be a restoration of the doctrines of Scripture, and recognizes no authority as transcending or even equaling that of the *Written Word*. Faith in the absolute sufficiency of the Scriptures may indeed be called the corner stone of Protestantism, as it was of the primitive Church after the departure of inspired apostles. The chief contest of Protestantism with Rome was as to the authority of Scripture as above tradition, Church councils, and popes. The contest to-day with false criticism is as to the integrity of the Scriptures and their reliability in matters of truth and fact. In the Fifth and Sixth of our Articles the Church accepted the challenge of Rome as to the first, and equally accepts the modern challenge as to the second. The Methodist Church believes in the divine inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficien-

cy of the teachings of the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament. It places these writings supremely above all other authority, and accepts as truth whatever may be proved therefrom. It equally rejects as unnecessary to salvation whatever matters of belief may not be clearly proven therefrom.

The faith of Methodism on these points is absolute. It holds not only to the idea of an originally sufficient, true, inerrant revelation, but also to the doctrine of a providential preservation of these records unimpaired and complete to the present time. The doctrine stands complete on its every side. The two Articles referred to are in language approved, and they admirably express the belief of the Church to-day, as they expressed the belief of the Church at the beginning.

## ARTICLE V

### THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION.

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scriptures, we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

#### *The Names of the Canonical Books.*

Genesis,	Judges,
Exodus,	Ruth,
Leviticus,	The First Book of Samuel,
Numbers,	The Second Book of Samuel,
Deuteronomy,	The First Book of Kings,
Joshua,	The Second Book of Kings,

The First Book of Chronicles,	The Psalms,
The Second Book of Chronicles,	The Proverbs,
The Book of Ezra,	Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,
The Book of Nehemiah,	Canticles, or Song of Solomon.
The Book of Esther,	Four Prophets, the Greater,
The Book of Job,	Twelve Prophets, the Less.

All the books of the New Testament as they are commonly received we do receive and account canonical.

Bishop Burnet remarks that this Article occupies its logical place in the Confession.<sup>1</sup> The four which precede it contain a statement of the main doctrines of Christianity concerning the belief in God, the Trinity, and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Then follows, in this Article, a definition of the rule of faith and a validation of the sources from which the former named doctrines are derived, and also of the records whereby they may be proved. The language appears to us to be a final statement of the doctrine of the sufficiency and authority of Holy Scripture. It will be observed that there is set forth in the Article no theory

---

<sup>1</sup>"In some respects it might have seemed natural to put it in as the First Article, as in the Helvetic Confession the First Article is *De Scriptura Sancta, vero Dei verbo*; but our reformers wisely put in the beginning of their Confession of Faith those doctrines on which the Church universal for fifteen hundred years had agreed, and which are the foundations of the Christian faith. Accordingly, the first five Articles treat of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption of the World, the Santification of Christians, and the Judgment of All Men. Unity on these points was of old considered to constitute catholic Christianity; and by declaring her orthodoxy on these catholic doctrines the Church of England in the very front of her Confession declares herself orthodox and catholic." (Bishop Browne, on the Articles.)



of the inspiration of the Bible, but that it is assumed and is sufficiently affirmed in the declaration concerning its completeness as the repository of divine truth. One could easily believe that the framers of this Article were all but inspired in this fact. What a bondage might a tenet that espoused a particular theory of inspiration have become! The First Article does not attempt to *prove* the existence of God, but assumes and declares it. The Fifth Article *assumes* and then *applies* the truth of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. There is no need for a confessional argument; there is no need for theorizing—inspiration is a *fact*, self-evident, enduring.

The scope and purpose of the present work do not require us, as seems to have been accepted as a duty by nearly all creed critics with whom we have become acquainted, to go into metaphysical arguments to support the correctness of the confessional statement. But we may add that from Paley to the schools of the present enough has not been made of the necessity for a revelation found in the moral constitution of things. Naturally and of necessity, we look somewhere for just such a revelation as we find in the Scriptures. It is a *due* from the beneficent Creator to his moral creatures. It then becomes a question of demonstration and *proof* as to whether the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament are that revelation, and herein lies chiefly the field and the reason for a theology. The Confession is a matter of *faith* and not of metaphysical arguments. Faith long ago settled itself on the truth of these Scriptures. Its office is only to affirm. So far as the Confession concerns, the arguments are

closed; the proofs are all in. The details of the development of the many subsidiary doctrines concerning the literary character, the verbal meanings, and even the internal teachings of the Scriptures belong to a species of literature more flexible, more amenable to change and modern phrasing than is the Confession. The truth and sufficiency of revelation being declared, and its identity established, the office of the Article has been served.

Bishop Browne speaks of this Article as being the first controversial tenet of the Confession. By that he means the first in controversy with Rome, which controversy was the occasion and reason for the writing. The language of the controversy is clear enough. Both by the mouth of her schoolmen and in her Councils, Rome had declared that the written Scriptures were *not* a sufficient guide to the world's salvation; but that there is a traditional doctrine, an *unwritten* revelation, without a knowledge of which the world cannot be saved. This doctrine of tradition Rome claims to have derived by a direct succession from the mouths of the apostles. Protestantism not only denies the truth of this claim, but rejects the doctrine of traditions in general. This Article is the voice of a Protestantism which has inherited from the beginning. Since we take the Scriptures themselves to be supreme, it is easy from their own words to prove both the groundlessness and the sin of the claim that traditions are of equal authority with the written Word. The Master condemned the trust which the Jews placed in the traditions received from their fathers. St. Paul consistently warned the early Christians

against turning aside to the traditions of men, and St. Peter in a notable passage declares the Christian's salvation to be a redemption from the vanity of such traditions as Rome would make a very condition of doctrinal soundness.<sup>2</sup> A single passage only is necessary to establish the positive side of the argument. It is part of St. Paul's commendation of the young Bishop of Ephesus: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation."<sup>3</sup> If to this be added the curse pronounced upon the corrupter of Scripture in the book of Revelation,<sup>4</sup> the Scriptures have declared and vindicated their own sufficiency.

1. "The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation." The potent word in this declaration is *salvation*. The Scriptures are a means to an end. They were spoken and recorded to advance and complete human redemption. Their use will be fulfilled only when the race has completed the cycle of its perfection. "All things necessary." It contains nothing that is not necessary; or if so, it contains that thing in the most incidental way. Agreeably to this declaration, it may be said that the Bible is not a treatise on the natural sciences, yet it contains much that is valuable to those sciences. It is not a system of philosophy, yet it contains much that is profoundly philosophical. It is not primarily *literature*, and yet it transcends in that field. It is the embodiment of moral and spiritual truth. It is a manual of, a guide to, salvation.

---

<sup>2</sup>1 Peter i. 18. <sup>3</sup>2 Timothy iii. 15. <sup>4</sup>Revelation xxii. 18, 19.

2. "Whatever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." The only sure defense against erroneous doctrine is the Bible itself. Creeds are not a certain defense; they are too often a snare, and for that reason their language should be brief, guarded, and inclusive only of absolute verities. The full appeal should be made to the Written Word. This is the strong position of Methodism. Doctrines repugnant to the Word or plainly not supported by it should be reprobated with confidence and spirit. No matter how enticing these doubtful teachings appear on their face or in their immediate results, there should be no cause in us for hesitancy in opposing them, nor any lack of courage or sincerity in declaring our belief concerning them. The Written Word is such a rule that, when believed and fully accepted, it gives certain confidence.

3. "In the name of the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and the New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church." In the early Church there was little difference as to what was Scripture. From the writings of the Church Fathers we learn that from the second century the accepted canonical books were almost exactly as we have them to-day. In fact, there was no variation except in the case of the Revelation, the Epistle of James, and the Second Epistle of Peter, and possibly one other. But where one list omitted one, another contained it, so that the omissions are

considered to be accidental.<sup>5</sup> St. Jerome translated some of the Apocryphal books into the Latin Vulgate; but the earlier Church, both East and West, gave to them a secondary value. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1546), however, for the reason that these Apocryphal Scriptures gave color to some popish superstitions, declared them canonical and anathematized all who should disallow the claim. The Anglican Articles which were written soon afterwards contained what are now our Fifth and Sixth Articles on the canon, which are in fact the first historic Protestant statement of what is *very* Scripture. On its completeness as a *confessional* writing we have already remarked. We dare affirm that the world contains none other so good nor that an improvement upon it can ever be fashioned.

## ARTICLE VI.

### OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and the New Testament everlasting life is offered

---

<sup>5</sup>“Tertullian, ‘the first father of the Western Church,’ who lived near the end of the second century—that is, a little more than one hundred years after the close of the canon—is one of our chief witnesses to the truth of the order and number of the books as we now have them. He mentions all the books of the Old Testament except five. He catalogues a number of the Apocryphal Books, and refers to all the books of the New Testament by name, excepting Second Peter, Third John, and James. The names of the books wanting are believed to have been lost or omitted in the copying of his manuscripts.” (See “Life and Writings of Tertullian,” by the Bishop of Bristol.)

to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

This Article is a reaffirmation of the canonical integrity of the Old Testament in its entirety. There was once, as there is now, a diversion in some quarters against the authority and value of the Old Testament. The Methodist Church does not in its Confession stand for that idea. It has no syllable of sympathy with it. The Scriptures are one, of equal authority and burdened with one thought—namely, Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. The New Testament is of one substance with the Old, bearing to it the same relation that the ripened fruit does to the tree.

I. "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New." Both Christ and the New Testament writers quoted freely from the Old Testament, and always with unquestioning indorsement of its validity and pertinence. More than once the Master declared his own life and ministry to be the fulfillment of the Scriptures, meaning the Hebrew Scriptures. There is no conflict in the moral teachings of the Old and the New. The ceremonial law so fully set forth in the Pentateuch was a "schoolmaster" to bring the world to Christ. The sacrifices of the old dispensation were types of the "one oblation and satisfaction" made by Christ on the

cross. His life was a perfect keeping of the Ten Commandments.

2. "Both in the Old and the New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ." Christ was the "Angel of the covenant" who was with Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness. He was the "Shiloh" to come; he was the "Seed of the woman" who should bruise the serpent's head. He was the "Daysman" of Job and the "Redeemer" who should stand upon the earth in the latter days. He was the "Messiah" of the prophets, the "Son of David," the "King of Israel," the "Desire of the Nations." St. Matthew's story of the Nativity proves that the world was in a state of expectancy at the coming of the Babe because of the Old Testament types and the specific promise of a Messiah. The sordid attached a political significance to the Messianic office, but the devout saw in it the salvation of God—the means of giving everlasting life to the world. So Simeon and Anna in the temple blessed him as "a light to lighten" and a comfort to those who "looked for redemption in Jerusalem." Peter likewise confessed him as the One who alone had "the words of eternal life." All this was an echo of the teachings of the Old Testament and before the first syllable of the New had been written.

3. "They are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." It has been much the fashion of a certain school of criticism to decry the state of doctrinal development illustrated in the Old Testament. Especially is this true with reference to the doctrine of the future life. No

criticism could be more vulnerable. Especially in the Psalms and the later prophecies is the hope of eternal life developed; and not only developed, but the doctrine supporting it is defined.

4. "The law given from God by Moses as touching ceremonies and rites doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth." The New Testament plainly abrogates the ceremonies of the Old Testament. The civil precepts of the Pentateuch were given to the Jews as a people. Many of them would do well in the political constitutions of modern States, but they are not of necessity to be received except it may be in their spirit. The idea of a theocracy belongs to the religious infancy of the world. With a revelation, both in the Word and in the race, men must work out their own ends of law, of government, of industry, and of moral and social restraint. It is the only way in which the world can become perfected.

5. "The commandments which are called moral." These are specifically the Ten Commandments and any others which are subsidiary to them as moral precepts. The Church accepts the Ten Commandments as the final word on moral obligation. Each commandment is equal to the other; none is greater than the others. Each one is an absolute command, embodying an absolute obligation. The table is the transcript of the divine mind, the perfect will of God. To the Decalogue every man is directly and personally amenable. The Church has written no more certain tenet for itself than this. The ceremonial law was



fulfilled in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The law of commandments was also perfectly kept by him not that the commandments might pass away, but that those who are enlightened of his grace might see the way to keep them in spirit and in truth.

## GENERAL EXPOSITION.

### III. SIN AND FREE WILL.

Sin is a violation of the order of public law that is upheld by God's authority, a violation of the law that is correlate with the eternal being of God himself.—*Ritschl*.

If we all received an unspeakable injury by being seminally in Adam when he fell, according to the first covenant, we all received also an unspeakable blessing by being in his loins when God spiritually raised him up and put him on gospel ground.—*John Fletcher*.

Such is man apart from the gospel of Christ as depicted in the New Testament: every *one guilty of personal transgression*, and in consequence of it in present bondage to the hostile power of sin, is under the anger of God and in a state of ruin from which no human hand can rescue.—*Joseph Agar Beet*.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED).*

#### III. SIN AND FREE WILL.

THE Articles of Religion from Seven to Twelve, inclusive, are homogeneous. They deal with the profound doctrines of sin, the freedom of the will, faith, and the quality of human actions. Though so brief in form, they constitute a coherent statement of the most important matters of theology on its manward side. Our early creed critics call these "the special doctrines of the Christian religion," as they call those on the Godhead and the Messiahship of Christ "the first principles of Christianity." Those on the Holy Scriptures they denominate the doctrines of "the rule of life and faith;" and this, it must be seen, is a very helpful division.

The doctrines of this division are what have been technically described as anthropological—that is, relating to man. They are to be subdivided into the doctrines of nature and the doctrines of grace. The first two, VII. and VIII., describe man in a state of nature, before he has "tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come." The remaining four refer to him in a state of grace after he has been "justified by faith" and made a child of God by adoption. The present chapter will be given

to an interpretation of the two Articles relating to the first estate.

We have elsewhere dealt with the confessional or dogmatic aspects of the Article on Original Sin, and need not renew the argument here. We may, however, observe that in some form the subject of sin must of necessity enter into every complete doctrinal formulary. Indeed, it does enter as essential matter into every statement touching the doctrines of salvation. "And thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." It is to be thought upon as a matter of no small significance, and one not of accident but of a higher providential purpose, that these confessions, like the forms of Scripture, are recognized as different from what we had made them had we had the ordering. How would we fain fill out here and there what appear to be the lapses and silences of Scripture! Let us rather find in ourselves the grace of thankfulness that it is not ours to alter. I take it that an admission of apparent, or even actual, lack here and there in the Confession is not an utterly ill judgment of those parts. For one, I should suspect it if it provoked no such criticism. The particular point in question is the one of all others on which men must despair of satisfying themselves when they come to make written statements. As there is nothing more difficult of mastery than sin, so there is nothing in the life so little amenable to our human understandings. But although there is no study more beset by doctrinal and metaphysical intricacies than the one we are now entering upon, there is none more important.

## ARTICLE VII.

## OF ORIGINAL OR BIRTH SIN.

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

About this Article the wars of Methodism have been waged, and it is that one which of all others one might wish to see amended or verbally revised. But the more one concentrates study upon it, the more does it appear doubtful if emendation would be advantageous. It is a polemical tenet aimed at an ancient error; but it likewise maintains a healthy controversy with the modern tendency to minimize the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to deny the ruin wrought and entailed by sin. In the light of the ancient heresy the language of the tenet is justified, and as a check to the modern error it has a commendable value. Let it be understood that it is not the function of the confession to discuss the entire theology of sin; that is done for us in the New Testament, and the subject is of such importance that appeal must be taken to the original and supreme statement in the Word. The Article deals with a controverted fact about sin, not with the admitted, incontrovertible fact itself.

Hardwick in reaching a conclusion as to the spirit, and frequently the purpose, of the English Articles found it necessary to inquire narrowly into the views held by Cranmer "in the years immediately after the accession of King Edward," that being the season

of the incubation of those historic dogmas.<sup>1</sup> In settling certain points of inquiry concerning the Articles of Methodism a like study must be undertaken to find out the exact conclusions at which Mr. Wesley had arrived "in the years immediately" preceding the year 1784, the year in which the Twenty-Four Articles were given to American Methodism. If it should be objected that Mr. Wesley *wrote* no articles himself, but only selected such as he approved from the cast of Cranmer and Parker, and that therefore the Articles of his selection and abridgment can symbolize no other theology than that of the first compilers, I answer that both Cranmer and Parker, as I have conclusively shown, borrowed the terms of their Articles from other confessions and yet made them voice the theology of *Anglicanism*. Mr. Wesley, in his turn, made their Articles voice the theology of *Methodism*.

It is a well-known fact that the literature which Mr. Wesley created, as being a history of his developing theological views during more than fifty years of active labors, may be made to support opposing interpretations of not a few subjects, and notably of the doctrine of original sin. But all must accept as fair, in his case, the method pursued by Hardwick in the case of Cranmer. Wesley's very latest views on the doctrine of sin are those deducible from a grammatical interpretation of the Seventh Article of our Confession. It embodies the belief on that subject held by present-day Methodism.

It is well known that as late as 1756 Mr. Wesley

---

<sup>1</sup>See Hardwick, "History of the Articles," p. 66.

held views on the doctrine of original sin that were pronouncedly Augustinian in character—*i. e.*, he held to the doctrine of transmitted *guilt* as a consequence of original sin. But by 1785 these views had given place to others diametrically opposed and thoroughly scriptural in language and import. His fifty-two sermons, which, with his “Notes” on the New Testament, were made the doctrinal standards of the Wesleyan Church, were thoroughly revised by him certainly as late as 1783. In the sermon on “Christian Perfection,” Volume III. of this collection, occurs this definition of sin, which is accepted as his final and most mature view of the whole subject:

You say: “Yes, it [perfection] is inconsistent with the last Article; it cannot consist with salvation *from sin*.” I answer: “It will perfectly well consist with salvation from sin, according to that definition of sin (which I apprehend to be the scriptural definition of it), *a voluntary transgression of a known law*. Nay, but all transgressions of the law of God, whether voluntary or involuntary, are sin; for St. John says: ‘*All sin is a transgression of the law.*’ True, but he does not say: ‘*All transgression of the law is sin.*’ This I deny: let him prove it that can. For no *body*, or matter of any kind, can be *sinful*; spirits alone are capable of sin. Pray, in what part of the body should sin lodge? Only the soul can be the seat of sin.”

This declaration, together with the act of Mr. Wesley in eliding the Augustinian section of the Ninth Article of the English Confession so as to make of the remaining section the Seventh Article of our Confession, shows conclusively the perfect deliverance and freedom of his mind from the dogma of inherited



guilt.<sup>2</sup> On this position of Mr. Wesley, Dr. Albert Taylor Bledsoe, who has done more than any one man to fix the theological views of the Methodism of the Southern half of the continent, says:

It is certain that the very notion respecting original sin, and the effects of infant baptism, which Mr. Wesley so earnestly advocated in 1756, he cut from his creed, or confession of faith, in 1784, and gave them to the winds. Is not the fact that he expunged the absurd notion of the *guilt* of original sin from the Ninth Article of his own Church, leaving no trace of it in the Articles he prepared for the Methodists of this country, a significant hint as to what his followers should do with the same notion in his work on the "Doctrine of Original Sin?"

He said in one of his sermons of that year (1785) that "sin is the voluntary transgression of a known law." Now according to this definition the "original sin" of newborn infants (as it is called) is not truly or strictly *sin at all*. They are certainly not guilty of any *voluntary* transgression of any law whatever.<sup>3</sup>

But after all has been said (and for one we hold to these conclusions as final), our Articles do teach—and in this they accord with Scripture—that in the

---

<sup>2</sup>The rejected part of the Ninth (Anglican) Article reads as follows: "So that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and therefore in every person born into this world it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρόνημα σάρκος*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God; and although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

<sup>3</sup>"Christian Theology," *Southern Review*, October, 1876.

thought of the atonement there was a true and terrible sense in which the whole race had fallen under *condemnation* because of *sin*. The righteous sacrifice of Christ removed unconditionally the original imputation of guilt. This imputation was upon the race as *a whole*, and was removed by *one act of atonement*. A familiar illustration may be supposed. A father commits a capital crime, and falls into the disgrace naturally attending the execution of a just legal penalty. His children not only share his material and social undoing, but, in a sense, his penalty, not indeed of direct sentence, but more really it may be than if a measured penalty were visited. It is the same in the larger estate of man. The children that share the penalty must share also the pardon and restoration when they come. Our race did share unconditionally this restoration to favor.

This is the meaning of the clause in the Second Article: "Not only for original *guilt*, but also for the actual sins of men." The words "original guilt" there describe a view which no other form of words could now describe, which has been modified by the historical advance of Anglican and Wesleyan theology into the doctrine expressed in the terms of the Article (VII.) now under discussion: "Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." This "corruption" may and quickly does become *sin* when indorsed by the choice or election of the will. Then that which before was negative now becomes positive in quality.

The particular illustration of the doctrine is in infants or children who have not committed *actual sin*.

The Articles of our Confession and the maturest views of our founder deliver us upon certain scriptural ground. Such children are without *sin*, without *guilt*, without condemnation, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven." In view of our historical and confessional situation on this subject, Dr. Bledsoe says: "It is impossible, therefore, that newborn infants could be guilty of *sin*, in the true sense of the word, inasmuch as they are incapable of a voluntary transgression of a known law. They are fallen, ruined, depraved beings, but not sinners. They deserve no punishment whatever."

These views have become an open vision to every man who follows sanely in the paths which the history of our theology has made. The arbitrary terminology which remains to us in some instances (notably in this) has sometimes brought confusion; but its substitution by another less direct, less well-defined would augment the confusion a thousand times over. It is plain that the destiny of Methodism is to fight her newest battles on the doctrines of sin and salvation under the old flag of her liberation.

I have thought it well to be at so much pains concerning this particular point in our Confession since it is the one on which are usually concentrated the charges and exceptions that the hasty and sciolistic critics are accustomed to urge against the Articles as being relics and remains of an effete Calvinism, or whatever else, according to the taste or bent of the objector. If one desires to establish such a charge against the theology of Methodism, he must go elsewhere than to its Arti-

cles of Religion. After a lifelong search for truth, Mr. Wesley found it and led his followers into the light of it as embodied in these clarified Articles.

#### INTERPRETATION.

I. "*Original sin.*" We have elsewhere discussed the technical use of this term as an Article heading in an Arminian Confession. It is retained, and must continue to be retained,<sup>4</sup> through the force of the precedent of the Augustinian dogma which has dominated every principal theology of the world—that is, the modern world—except our own. Augustine may well be called the *father* of the dogma of inherited guilt, for it was unknown to the early fathers of the Church, and finds no warrant in Holy Scripture. Augustine *invented* it as a means of making headway against Pelagius and Cœlestius, whose errors were, in fact, not so great as his own. From Irenæus to Ambrose there is found no support of the Augustinian dogma. They held, did these earlier fathers, Eastern and Western, to the doctrine of man's natural corruption, his hereditary moral ruin; but there was no dream that this corruption was guilt, or deserved, or was to be visited by, the wrath of God. In this Methodism stands with the Church of the first four centuries.<sup>5</sup> The oft-repeated words of the Master concerning the

---

<sup>4</sup>This title has been retained in the Japanese Articles, though all other references to original sin have been cut out.

<sup>5</sup>"The early fathers held and asserted, it is true, the universality of human corruption, or the original infection of our nature from Adam. But this 'corruption' or 'infection' they did not call sin." (Bledsoe.)

state of little children are sufficient to overturn a world of theology built upon the false premise of a sin inherited from Adam.

The doctrine of Methodism refers the origin of sin to a *principle*. The New Testament ultimately deals with *sin* in the concrete. The Holy Ghost convinces the world of *sin*. All sin, all transgression of the law, has its root in that principle of evil. The first sin—that is, Adam's sin—sprang out of it, like a plant from its root. All subsequent sin is related to that first sin as the expandings of a tree are related to the first stage of its growth. Mark this: the *first* sin—the sin of Adam—is not the principle; that principle lies deeper than the Adamic sin, if so it must be called. That principle is ever present. Those who sin after *Adam* do not sin *in* him, but *with* him. In addition to this, the moral effects of the first sin, and indeed of all earlier sins, have made it easier for us who come after to sin. We are put by heredity on the plane of natural desire. When the laws of heredity are fully understood and expounded, it is almost certain that we shall see that the scientific doctrine will be much nearer the oft-decried theological doctrine than is now generally believed. It will reveal a practical identity with the teachings of this Methodist tenet. It is a question of natural and necessary entailments which are to be arrested and remedied by adequate interpositions. Here is the sphere of the great, glad gospel of the sin-destroying seed of the woman. But for the remedial agencies of grace sin had long ago destroyed the race.

2. "In the following of Adam." It is plain that those who sin do not simply *imitate* the first sinner of

the race, but are influenced by a principle which that first sin uncovered and developed into life—a principle which has been kept active by every subsequent sin. It is not *imitation*, but *participation*; not so-called federal implication, but a partnership complication. We are all sinners together, and the sin inevitably springs from the ancient root and source.

Certain of questions which will be raised by the above reflections, I undertake a brief discussion of what is involved in the idea of a *principle of evil* from which sin is derived. The giving of a commandment to the first moral representative of the race supposed his ability to keep or to violate it. The first idea relates to the principle of *original righteousness*, from which man is “very far gone.” Original righteousness was the virgin innocency—the untested powers—of man. The other idea—the ability to violate the commandment—relates to the opposite *principle* of sin. The angels are believed to have sinned before man. The nature of angelic sin is in no wise different from human sin—it is the transgression of a known law. That law was the substance of the Ten Commandments. The principle of evil was embodied in the serpent—the tempter. That principle is ever present, and becomes sin to those who allow it, who adopt it in action. The first man allowed it, adopted it, and thus brought it into the sphere of his affections and motives. Heredity, which is a correlate of life, set the principle moving down the currents of universal being. The principle of evil is, everywhere, on the negative side of the commandment, as the principle of grace or righteousness is on the positive side.

3. "It is the corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." This tenet keeps the middle path and takes the certain ground that the race—the whole race—has been corrupted by sin; that it is not what it would have been had not sin "by one man entered in." It furthermore assumes that this corruption has come through the principle of sin, and points to the law of heredity as the channel through which this principle has operated. We are constantly seeing how wisely time and history have shaped these Articles, eliminating dogmatical elements and leaving them affirmative of those great facts which have been and still are in the crucible of experience or at the sword edge of polemics.

The confessional theology of Methodism is unique in this, that it views the moral history of man as in no sense the outcome of arbitrary or accidental conditions; but rather as a sublime struggle upward against forces and conditions that fell out according to his own nature and the conditions of the moral universe about him. Sin did not come upon him as the result of an arbitrary decree, but it came at the point where his own free and untrammelled will met a principle which pleased and enticed him. At that point he discovered his weakness, his need. The remedy for that need showed him his true destiny—an inheritance in Deity. If no member of the race had ever fallen, Christ had still been necessary to it—its Saviour, its Perfecter. But now the race knows itself only through its sin, for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

4. "Whereby man is very far gone from original

righteousness." The Article attempts no picture or account of man's original state—the estate of the first sinner before his sin. Whatever may have been in the minds of the confessors, they carefully refrained, in this particular, from overdoing their work as the makers of a confession. So the meaning of our Article at this point is neither more nor less than that men through sin are "very far gone from" the ideal of righteousness which the Maker of them designed they should attain as their birthright. Righteousness is itself a *principle*—an original principle—no less than sin, and lies back of the first righteous act of man, as the principle of sin lies back of the first sin. The first commandment—the one which embodied the ideal of "original righteousness"—though a moral one, must have been most simple in its form and requirements. That is more than suggested by the allegorical figures under which it appears in the record. It must needs have been simple and rudimentary to match the infantile mind of the creature; for whatever is said of his state of righteousness, it must be understood as a negative one—a condition of innocence and of untrammelled heredity. The moral effect, however, must be the same, as we see that the antediluvians were under different standards from those under which the Jews of the theocracy lived, and they were under still a different letter of requirement from that under which Christians are placed. The state of Christian grace is infinitely superior to the state of "original righteousness" which our dogmatics have assigned to the beginning days of the head of the moral race. Christians may wisely use this Scripture-supported fact in mod-



ifying those stern scholastic theorizings which the world's old theology fixed upon them. The founder of our Church and the purger of our Confession did so for himself, and so set us a wholesome example.

5. "Inclined to evil, and that continually" What is more certainly provable from experience? However it came to be so, this fact abides beyond controversy: that in us—that is, in our flesh—there dwell a spirit of disobedience, a persistent waywardness, a selfishness, unaccountable, surprising, destructive, complete. Grace is our only help.

## ARTICLE VIII.

### OF FREE WILL.

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works of faith and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will.

This Article is an extension of the arguments of the former. It was anciently denied that original sin, or, as it is properly described, the infectious principle of evil, had impaired, or dominated, the wills of men so as to affect their powers of choice. This tenet is a denial of the heresy.

The heredity of disobedience has taken away the strength of man's will, so that "he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength" for "calling upon God." Neither has he power to do good works or accomplish of himself any task pleasing to

God. Yet "with the grace of God by Jesus Christ preventing," he "may have a good will" and choose that which is right and best. This Article is not a discussion of the abstract doctrine of the will, but of the will as it must be helped by divine grace in making holy choices. This puts the emphasis where it will best serve the Church of the future.

The Anglican Arminianism of the Confession is at full tide in this Article. Augustinianism and Calvinism deny the freedom of the will—the freedom of human choice. This idea is utterly discarded by our theology. Even the sinner has freedom of choice, much more the man under grace. The power to *choose* and the power to *appropriate* are different. The wills of all men are free, but only grace can empower us to appropriate what our wills have the intellectual force to choose.

1. "The fall of Adam." This form of statement is not found in Scripture; but, like the term "original sin," has become a confessional description that cannot be substituted without confusion and misunderstanding. Besides, the phrase "the fall of Adam" exactly describes the calamity which resulted in the case of the first sinner. It is not only a fall; it is death—soul death—when it secures dominion in the life. It is easy also, in the light of our most scriptural confession, to see that this first fall was the fall of the race. It has been multiplied in the countless disobediences made possible—aye, made certain—by reason of that first. A fall from innocence is a fall to death, and it is certain the first man accomplished that. From the wilderness and night of his loss his generations issued.

2. "Without the grace of God by Christ Jesus preventing us." Those who think of the gospel as an afterthought of the divine purpose—an expedient to cure the unforeseen disease of Adamic sin—narrow the scheme of an infinite God to the limits of human thinking. "The grace of God by Christ Jesus" is a plan of worlds, of heights and depths, and eternities. It is a cure not for man's sins alone, but for all the disorders of the universe. And yet—what exaltation is ours!—it is perfectly revealed in its *preventing*—going before—us men to make effective our choice of will when we would seek divine things. Moreover, it coalesces with our wills to make us will the things of God. "Confessedly the mystery of godliness is great!"

# GENERAL EXPOSITION

## IV JUSTIFICATION AND GOOD WORKS.

We cannot, therefore, be too decisive in marking that Jesus demands a real righteousness as the condition of entering into the kingdom of heaven—a righteousness which differs from that of the Jewish law only in being more inward, more intrinsic, more searching and absolute; a righteousness which in one place he does not hesitate to compare with that of God himself. *Ye shall be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.* The forgiveness which he offers to men—which we shall see he purchases for men—is free. But as he knows what is in men and searches the intentions of the heart, he grants forgiveness only to those who will make it the starting point of a new life.—“*The Teachings of Jesus,*” by Robert F. Horton.

## CHAPTER X.

### *GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED).*

#### IV JUSTIFICATION AND GOOD WORKS.

JUSTIFICATION by faith was a rediscovery of Christianity. Although the schoolmen and councils of mediæval times discoursed learnedly of justification, it was, as a doctrine, so thoroughly overlaid with ritualism and so-called sacraments that it no longer resembled the doctrine deduced from St. Paul's words of matchless simplicity, "the just shall live by faith." Doubtless even in those ages of spiritual night there were very many who in their hearts formulated the doctrine to its completeness and found "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." But the truth was hid from the wise and prudent. It was the despositum of the German Reformation, as holiness was the depositum of the Wesleyan Reformation. On the general subject constituted of the two Mr. Wesley said that very few people at the beginning of the Wesleyan movement were clear in their minds with reference either to justification or sanctification, often hopelessly confusing the two. This the Tridentine doctors did, so far as their anathematizing canons could in any sense be styled doctrines. In this sense, then, justification by faith is a Methodist doctrine. It was Wesleyan theology that emancipated it from the entanglements of the schoolmen, and even the misconception of Luther, who included in it the

doctrine of sanctification, so far as he comprehended the meaning of the scriptural doctrine. It was the task and the glory of Methodism to show the inseparable coincidence of justification and sanctification and yet to point out their synchronous or practically synchronous occurrence in different spheres—justification being what is done *for* us; sanctification being what is done *in* us—the beginnings of the latter following instantly upon the completion of the former. The first, justification, is instantaneous; but the latter is progressive. This is the preponderant teaching of Methodism, and with reference to the former this is the inference from the Article, which describes the issue between mediævalism and the evangelical spirit of the new ages.

#### ARTICLE IX.

##### OF THE JUSTIFICATION OF MAN.

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

The doctrine of justification by faith is now a settled issue of Christianity so far as the evangelical Churches are concerned. There is scarcely a syllable of difference or dissent throughout the body, except where the doctrine of the ultramissionists may have introduced contradictions. But it is the prime difference between the Protestant bodies and Rome. Simple and direct faith in Christ without intermediation of rite, saint, or priest is the doctrine which Rome most dreads

as the one most certainly destructive of the whole papal system. It is this that gives justification its place of preëminence in all Protestant confessions. It is the historical battle sign, and the token of a prophecy to complete its fulfillment in the evangelization of the nations. Mr. Wesley defines the position of Methodism on this doctrine, which is the doctrine of our Article, as it was that of the Anglican Article as follows:

1. That no good work properly so-called can go before justification.

2. That no degree of true sanctification can be previous to it.

3. That as the meritorious cause of justification is the life and death of Jesus Christ, so the condition of it is faith—faith alone.

4. That both inward and outward holiness are consequent on this faith, and are the ordinary, stated condition of final justification.

1. "We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Imputed righteousness is the doctrine of hope. It brings eternal life within the instant grasp of the believing sinner. Such a sinner is instantly justified, and in that moment is accepted as being righteous for the sake of the righteous Saviour in whom he trusts. Moreover, in that moment he becomes innocent in a double sense—namely, first, by reason of the divine *pardon*, and also through the operation of grace that gives him a *new heart*. In that moment he that an inconceivably short time before was but a condemned sinner is made meet to be a partaker of "the inheritance of the saints in light."



Jesus, thy truth and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
'Mid flaming worlds in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

In addition to the Wesleyan definitions already quoted, we may here introduce the theses of Mr. Wesley propounded in 1744 at his first Conference:

1. To be justified is to be pardoned and received into God's favor.
2. Faith is the condition of justification.
3. Repentance and works meet for repentance must go before this faith.
4. Faith is a divine, supernatural evidence of things not seen; it is a scriptural sight of God and the things of God. First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost: "Christ loved me and gave himself for me." This is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same spirit bears witness: "Thou art pardoned; thou hast redemption in his blood!" And this is saving faith.
5. No man who hears the gospel can go to heaven without this faith, whatever a heathen may do.

This categorical treatment of the doctrine brings us naturally to the heart of the Article in the two words: "By faith." Faith is the pivot on which man turns from death to life. The soul which accepts Jesus Christ as the Son of God is justified—*i. e.*, it is treated as though it were both innocent and just. There is no covering of sin in justification, no deception practiced upon the Judge. He knows. His reasons are outside of ourselves. The righteousness is wholly of Another. The justified man is the penitent, believing *sinner*.

2. "Our own works or deservings." We shall shortly have occasion to look more fully into the doctrine

of good works under Article Ten. The specific teaching here is that, having failed to keep the moral law, no subsequent effort of the sinner to renew obedience of himself can avail since the law is inexorable when once broken. Access to salvation by that path is closed; hence that we may be “justified by faith” is a doctrine to be cherished.

3. “Wherefore that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort.” Something has set a mighty difference between Protestant lands and those dominated by Roman Catholicism. This is seen in material matters. Protestant lands are immeasurably richer, more potent politically, and more certainly replenishing in population. Their peoples are vastly more intellectual; their religion more enlightened, and more full of the higher and truer comfort, when faithfully practiced, literally turning their earth into a paradise. There can be found for all this no answer so satisfactory as the cardinal doctrine of Protestantism—justification by faith.

## ARTICLE X.

### OF GOOD WORKS.

Although good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by its fruit.

The teaching of this Article is so apparent that it needs little exposition. It makes three main points—namely:

1. Good works cannot put away our sins, nor are they sufficient to pass our cause at the final judgment.

2. But good works are pleasing and acceptable to God.

3. Good works are the logical and necessary fruits of a life of faith, and are the evidence of its genuineness. Where good works are absent, the hidden works of grace have ceased ; the soul is dead.

This Article is especially the antithesis of the Roman teaching concerning the merits of the deeds and acts of saints and others, and especially works and acts of penance, whereby the performer is believed to acquire merit.

## ARTICLE XI.

### OF WORKS OF SUPEREROGATION.

Voluntary works, besides, over and above God's commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render to God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded of you say, We are unprofitable servants.

It seems impossible that men could ever have invented so monstrous a heresy as this. But the *calendar* of Rome required it. Its children are taught to pray to saints and martyrs, and these must needs have some extra virtues to their credit to be able to serve their devotees.

1. "Over and above God's commandments." The commandments of God are the full measure of even the most consecrated soul. But One has fully kept

these holy precepts; all others have come short, all others have been but unprofitable servants and must needs draw on the righteous Lord in the hour of test and measuring.

2. "Works of supererogation." *Super*, above, and *erogare*, to pay out—that is, a payment above the price demanded; to do more than the law requires. Rome is living in this doctrine to-day in those lands where its children are deluded into praying to saints—often, it may be, to the names of people who never lived—in the false assurance that these have laid up in heaven a great store of righteousness to be drawn upon like a bank account. There is no tenet in our creed for which we have more use in Latin-American mission fields than this.

3. "Arrogancy and impiety." The peril that besets the treatment or living of any doctrine appertaining to the higher life is that of being betrayed into arrogance and impiety. These high doctrines are often wrested of Satan to undo the overardent of spirit. This peril is itself enough to admonish men against attempts to state the doctrines of holiness in the terms of human speech. It is easy to say too little; to say too much is ruinous. They are stated in the Book. To exhort to the seeking of the higher things is safe; to dogmatize is to go nigh unto presumption.

## ARTICLE XII.

### OF SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION.

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall

into sin after justification; after we have received the Holy Ghost we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and by the grace of God rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

Several important statements are made in this Article, and some important inferences are to be drawn from it. First, the *justified* have "received the Holy Ghost;" but it is not impossible for these to fall into sin—to fall away. Secondly, but not every sin "after justification" is the sin against the Holy Ghost—*i. e.*, unpardonable—but whenever there is penitence there is pardon to be found. Thirdly, there is always a liability to sin even in the justified, and they must watch lest they enter into temptation.

This Article, like the others, was aimed at an olden error; but it is destructive of the boastful claims of many to-day. It is the most thoroughly anti-Calvinistic of all our tenets.

1. "The sin against the Holy Ghost." What that sin is can never be certainly known. It is blasphemy of some specific nature, an ascribing to evil powers of the works of the Spirit, it may be. It is certainly that final sin, the time and character of which no man can know, that drives the Spirit away forever, some obdurate rebellion or unbelief which seals the doom of the soul. Let every one fear *sin*—every sin, lest *that* be the one for which there is no forgiveness here or in the world to come.

2. "The grant of repentance." So long as the heart *would* repent, so long is there forgiveness. The un-

pardonable sin is the one of the heart that would not be penitent, even though a place were found for it.

3. "Received the Holy Ghost." Our Article puts this doctrine in a most natural and scriptural way. This clause appearing as it does here is a symbol in itself. Our faith is founded on the doctrine of the gift of the Spirit.

4. "Amend their lives." Ours is a gospel of hope; our Articles are pitched on a humanlike, and that is to say a Christlike, interpretation of the evangel. "His mercy endureth forever."

5. "They are to be condemned." All temporizing innovators are. Those who mince and botch, and curiously speculate about the so great things of human faith and salvation, are to be shunned as corrupters of the truth and enemies of men.



# GENERAL EXPOSITION.

V THE CHURCH.



The influence which has led so great a multitude to affiliate with Methodism is the power of the fundamental principles of Christianity as taught and preached by it.—*Rev. J. M. Buckley, D.D., LL.D.*

There is no warrant from Christ, the apostles, or the primitive Church for imposing long creeds on men before allowing them to enter the Church.—*Rev. J. O. Peck, D.D., North American Review, February, 1883.*

If we consider this point, we light upon the distinction which obtains between the Christian faith and the ecclesiastical system of dogma. For it turns out that this idea which determines one's interpretation of the Person of Christ is different in the two cases: In the Christian faith it is the idea of the kingdom; in dogma, it is the Logos idea.—*Julius Kaftan, D.D.*

## CHAPTER XI.

### *GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED).*

#### V THE CHURCH.

THE eight Articles of the Confession from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth, inclusive, constitute a double record concerning the Church, its rites, ordinances, and sacraments. This twofold record is, first, a protest against the errors and corruptions of Rome in dwarfing and debasing the divine ideals of the Church; and, secondly, it is a concurrent statement of the New Testament teachings concerning the same. It was about the Church as an institution of authority and about its sacramental administrations that abuses earliest gathered and developed their greatest power. It is proper, therefore, that a Protestant confession should deliver its chief force on these points. This was done by our Confessors in these Articles.

We have already explained, but cannot too strongly emphasize it as a thought to be carried along in these studies, that a confession, being in its nature a polemical answer to living and recurrent errors, does not go beyond the points in dispute or the letter of the truth perverted. What lies beyond this is left to the catechisms and to homilies and to private interpretations of the Scriptures. This rule has not guided in the making of *all* confessions. Very many have infringed

it; but the Anglican and Lutheran creed makers and critics have held it as a dictum, and in the light of modern experience it becomes the *final* principle of the science of statements. To this principle the Twenty-Five Articles are conformed, and nowhere more so than in the section now under review.

The present chapter is to be devoted to an exposition of the Article on the Church and to the two which immediately follow, since they relate themselves to the ceremonies and usages of the Church. Every student of the Reformation has noted that papacy as a system lays its chief stress upon the letter of sacraments and ceremonials in the Church, while Protestantism treats all these as signs, and appeals to the spiritual truth which lives behind them. With Roman Catholicism the Church is an end; with Protestantism it is a means, a divine means withal, but secondary to the agency of the Spirit. With Romanists the Church is infallible, even the Scripture being subject to emendation or enlargement by it; with Protestants the Church is made up of fallible men, whose ultimate counsel is liable to err and who can be certain of truth only in an appeal to Scripture which cannot be taken from, added to, or put on a parity with other word or writing. As a general thing, Protestants insist on an order or succession of sacramental acts as expedient and proper testimonies to the visible life of the Church, but do not settle the authoritative life of the Church in such a succession. Men are not to rise up as teachers on their own call, nor enter of their own empowerment into holy administrations, but ordination is not held to confer upon them any power other

than that which the Spirit gives to all saints. Orders and ordinances are only for the decent and proper administration of the Church's life.

### ARTICLE XIII.

#### OF THE CHURCH.

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

This Article particularly illustrates the principle for which we have been contending as essential in a confession in that it deals only with questions of truth in dispute. As between the papists and the Protestants there was, and is, no question as to the divine institution of the Church nor of its universal mission of evangelism. The mediæval Church was strong in its claim of divine authority, and also it was distinguished for its zeal of propagandism. What it had to give or command it stayed not to give and require.<sup>1</sup> But the points at issue were precisely those set forth in the tenet as it stands—namely, The Church inheres in a *congregation*, and not in a hierarchy. Its law and messages are *the pure word of God*, and not *traditions and ordinances of men*. The emphasis is further laid on *preaching*, and not on rituals and other devices and substitutes. It is as much as to say: "The constitution

---

<sup>1</sup>"The ever-growing theory of a kingdom of Christ under one vicar, predestined to embrace the world, was itself unfavorable to any limitation of the gospel vocation. The mediæval Church, at the worst, was in spirit and practice missionary." (Pope, "Theology," Vol. II., page 351.)

of the true Church is found in *the pure word of God*; look therein to become informed as to its authority, its mission, and its message. The record lacks nothing." In such a *congregation* the sacraments will be "duly administered according to Christ's ordinance." And this declaration is to disallow all masses, all sacramentarian superstitions and abuses, and establish the simple observance of symbolical institutions in the two sacraments which were ordained of Christ.

1. "The *visible* Church." There is no attempt to define the invisible Church; its constitution is beyond the terms of a confession. It is believed as a fact, and as such was never in dispute. The exclusive rule which in the Third Article is applied to the general resurrection is here applied to the Church invisible. In connection with the resurrection of Christ the general resurrection is simply affirmed. The greater contains the less. For the uses of the Confession the visible Church is the greater proposition. The declaration of the existence of the visible Church carries with it the necessary doctrine of the invisible. The divinity of Christ is completely proved in his perfect humanity. Heaven and the Church triumphant have their proof and formulary in the doctrines of the visible Church.

2. "A congregation." The Church is *ecclesia*, an assembly; each part supplieth life to the whole. It is a body, and its head is Christ. Each congregation types the whole, as each "faithful man" types the congregation. Undoubtedly this was the apostolic ideal of the Church. In those first days, before the dreams of hierarchy had come, the Church had the semblance of a family. The apostolic authority was that of par-

ents over their children. The individual group of disciples administered their affairs in a fashion truly familylike. The term "brethren," applied even to the highest of the apostles, indicated the spirit of fellowship and reciprocity which subsisted for two centuries after apostolic times. There appears to have been little deviation from these ideals. Each congregation elected its own deacons, presbyters, and bishops when there was necessity for the full complement; and it was only by degrees that the bishops began to exercise a higher authority than this election signified, or claim a right of administration superior to the suffrage of the congregation. When several Churches were associated together, then the opportunity for the assertion of power became possible; and so Rome, by claiming supremacy over all, at last molded everything to its will.

3. "In all those things that of necessity are requisite." An orderly administration is secured to the Church; but in nothing, either in office or discipline, is this to go beyond "necessity." The individual believer is himself "a king and priest unto God." The "all those things" applies to an administration of government, and not the sacraments, as the "grammatical construction" will show. A most comprehensive tenet, too. It embraces every function, office, and requirement of the Church—local and expansive, pastoral and evangelistic.

The Methodist Church is planted on this Article as a constitution of its organic life. It is a "congregation" founded in "a hunger and thirst after righteousness" and in the approving favor of God. Its appeal

of doctrinal integrity is to the Word of God; its ecclesiastical statement appeals to history; its ordinances and methods of administration are of the high law of expedience—the true apostolic ideal. On these it has stood; on these it must continue to stand. When these are fully realized, it of necessity blossoms into evangelism and missionary life.

#### ARTICLE XIV

##### OF PURGATORY.

The Romish doctrines concerning purgatory, pardons, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of Scripture, but repugnant to the Word of God.

This Article by reason of its title would seem to be slightly out of order as it stands, but an examination of its contents will show it to have been properly placed. Purgatory, in the purview of Roman Catholic theology, is a sort of annex to the Papal Church, a place where its imperfectly justified children are detained to be finished up by means of the mass and the supererogation of saintly virtues. But it is the cultural nature of this Article—*i. e.*, the issues which it makes on worship—which gives it its place of juxtaposition to the tenet of the Church. The content of the title—*viz.*, purgatory—is dismissed with a word as being “without warrant of Scripture;” but the various abuses of worship practiced by papists are taken up and condemned as “repugnant to the Word of God.”

1. “The Roman doctrine concerning purgatory.”

Purgatory, according to papal theology, is “a place in which the souls of those who died in a state of grace suffer for a time in expiation of venial sins or else for those sins which, though forgiven here, merit temporal punishment.” While here they are helped by prayers, alms, indulgences, and especially by the sacrifice of the mass. Truly it is “a fond thing,” too absurd to deserve serious refutation, and so the first confessors of Protestantism tossed it aside with a word. But it nevertheless was, and is, Rome’s secret of power over multitudes of mankind, and is both the root and fruit of many of its chiefest superstitions.

2. “Pardons, worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics.” It was Tetzels and his traffic in pardons and indulgences that brought on the Reformation. The worshiping and adoration of images and relics is “the mark of the beast” in all Romish lands. The pictures, bones, and garments of doubtful dead saints are often esteemed to carry a merit little, if any, short of that of the cross itself. Until Rome abates these, this Article must have a living pertinence in all lands where her voice is heard.

## ARTICLE XV

OF SPEAKING IN THE CONGREGATION IN SUCH A TONGUE AS THE PEOPLE UNDERSTAND.

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God, and the custom of the primitive Church, to have public prayer in the Church, or to minister the sacraments in a tongue not understood by the people.

Two objections are here entered against the use of an unknown tongue in public administration and teach-



ing in the Church—namely: First, it is repugnant to the Word of God; and, secondly, it was a custom unknown to the primitive Church. Both of these can be abundantly established. St. Paul in sundry places decries the use of an unknown tongue in public teaching and describes the user of it as speaking into the air. Other strong terms are employed against it. The primitive Church was absolutely without a dream of it. Several of the fathers, as Origen and Basil, expressly say that each country receiving the gospel worshiped in its own tongue. Until as late as the tenth century the peoples of the Western Church unfamiliar with the Latin tongue worshiped in their vernaculars. The compulsory use of Latin came about in this way: That language was almost universally understood in Europe about the tenth century, and was therefore in most general use in the Church. The ritual was naturally fixed in it. But as modern tongues began to form and national literatures grew up there was a reason for retaining the Latin, to maintain the power of Rome. Also the shameful traffic in benefices, bishoprics, etc., made it necessary for priests and bishops to be able to say mass in any land to which they might go. Further, it was the policy of mediæval Rome to keep the people in ignorance. Hence the persistence of the unknown tongue.

# GENERAL EXPOSITION.

## VI. THE SACRAMENTS.

This do in remembrance of me.—*The Master.*

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.—*Simon Peter.*

The second time that the question of the nature of Christianity was forced upon the Church as a whole was at the Reformation in connection with the controversy with Rome. When the Reformers broke with what was then historic Christianity, they were forced to give a reason for their conduct.—*William Adams Brown, "Essence of Christianity."*

## CHAPTER XII.

### GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONTINUED).

#### VI. THE SACRAMENTS.

WE have seen that it is upon the nature of the sacraments that the great controversies of Christianity have turned. The battle has raged on many different fields, but at last the issue has gone back to the meaning of those two divine ordinances established by our Lord, and commanded of him to be forever observed in his Church. Do they confer grace by the mere act of administration, *ex opere operato*? or, Are they only a sign and means of grace to those who receive them with faith? If the former, they truly were “keys” conferred upon the priesthood so fortunate as to have fallen early heirs to the right to administer. If the latter, then is there a priesthood of believers, and the kingdom of heaven is of faith, and faith only.

Very early the Church misread the words of the Lord in these sacraments, and so made one the gate of spiritual life and the other a daily sacrifice of flesh and blood to be offered up by an exclusive priesthood for the sins of the people, and this latter of Him of whom it was said in the Word that he was offered once for all.<sup>1</sup>

So strongly had the superstition of the mass taken

---

<sup>1</sup>Hebrews.

hold upon the Christian world that Luther, called of God to be the reformer of the Church, could not wholly shake it off, but to the end misread the words, "This is my body;" "This is my blood." As the degradation of the sacraments was the enslavement of the Church, so their restoration to scriptural simplicity and use has been the sign of the Church's emancipation.

## ARTICLE XVI.

### . OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel—that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments—that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction—are not to be counted for sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

If the Scriptures are the sole guide and charter of the Church, then there can be no issue raised as to the number of sacraments. There are but two—Bap-

tism and the Lord's Supper. The Scriptures alone are recognized by Protestants. The Roman Catholic Church, however, accepts, as we have seen, certain traditions as being of equal authority with the written Scriptures; it also insists on an infallible Church speaking through its pope with power to make and ordain new doctrines. By means of this power it has created five sacraments additional to the two instituted by our Lord. These are Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction. The evident purpose of this hierarchical legislation was to erect the most commonplace ordinances of the Church into mysteries, the better thereby to awe and hold the multitude of the Church's devotees. Moreover, the two simple sacraments instituted of Christ were invested with impossible mysteries and their spiritual use lost in a maze of superstitions. Against both these abuses this Article was aimed by the confessors. "The sacraments are certain signs of grace and God's good will toward us." There are two sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. The five commonly so called are spurious, as sacraments, being partly corrupt, or exaggerated, imitations of the apostles or else mere "states of life." In this Article the uses of a confession are fully met in both what is treated of and what is left unsaid. But as the Articles which immediately follow this recapitulate its statements we may reserve particular comments for those sections.

#### ARTICLE XVII.

##### OF BAPTISM.

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others

that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

This Article is not so much an anti-Romish tenet as it is a clear scriptural statement of the doctrine of baptism after the ground has been cleared. Rome was not the only enemy of the truth which the confessors had in view. The Anabaptists and other ultra reformers had begun to pervert the truth but half emancipated from Rome, and these called for certain definite strictures. The declaration concerning infant baptism was especially aimed at these non-Romanist perverters of the evangel.

1. "A sign of profession." Baptism is a badge designating the Christian as a man of a particular calling, civic societies having their uniform and distinguishing seals. This sign of water publicly received shows the believer's alignment. He elects thereby his companionship—some things he rejects, some he accepts. It is a mark of difference. "I will set a difference," said the Lord, who is to be the judge of all men. It "distinguishes," does this rite when reverently received. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor."

2. "Baptism is a sign of regeneration or the new birth." This is preëminently the sacramentarianism of Methodism. The Anglican text of the Article was by Mr. Wesley pared of every *hint* of baptismal regeneration, which suggestion, it must be allowed, went with the rejected clause. But as the Article now stands it is the final word theological on the initial sacrament of Christianity. Baptism is not regenera-

tion; it does not work regeneration; it is the sign of the dedicated life, the outward figure of an inward life begun in the grace of God ministered through faith.

2. "The baptism of young children." When this Article was written, there was little controversy on this subject beyond what we have indicated. It certainly was not an issue with Rome. As a controversy, it is distinctly modern. The clause in the Confession is a mere addendum, a seeming incident; but it can scarcely be regarded as other than prophetic. It states the confident, scriptural, matter-of-fact attitude of Methodism to-day. It is our heritage and needs no argument.

## ARTICLE XVIII.

### OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch, that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the means whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.



Article Eighteen is in its first paragraph, like the preceding one on Baptism, not only anti-Romanistic, but is a scriptural statement of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

1. The Lord's Supper is "a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another." It is more. "It is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death." It is a holy memorial of him, helping to emphasize his perpetual presence in the Church and the perpetual benefit of his passion and death. If we eat and drink worthily, and with faith receive the bread and wine (mere creatures), we partake of the body and blood of Christ. The elements are thus not the means but the occasion of our partaking. The *means* is faith, for the Article declares that the body of Christ is taken "only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." Carnal bread could not serve in this. The Romish doctrine of transubstantiation—that is, the claim that the priest turns the bread into Christ's very body and the wine into his very blood—is utterly denied.

## ARTICLE XIX.

### OF BOTH KINDS.

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

This Article deals with the Romish abuse of giving the people only the bread in the supper, the wine being drunk by the priest *for* the people. This the Article declares to be contrary to Christ's ordinances and commandment. The negation is complete.

## ARTICLE XX.

OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST, FINISHED UPON  
THE CROSS.

The offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit.

The Romish mass, which purports to be a new sacrifice of the very body of Christ each time it is celebrated by a priest, is the supreme manifestation of Roman Catholicism to-day, as it was nearly three centuries ago when this Article was written. There is to-day no human writing more pertinent, apt, and applicable than this. It must stand until this arch-abomination of Rome is purged away.



# GENERAL EXPOSITION.

## VII. CHRISTIAN OBLIGATIONS.

The problem that weighs on men's minds to-day is the social problem. It is a question that is of interest not only to economist and statistician, but to all. It touches alike the head worker and the hand worker.—*W S. Bruce, D.D., "Social Aspects of Christian Morality."*

And where among them all is the man whose influence—social, moral, religious—was productive of such vast good, and of so little evil, as that exerted by this plain man who exemplified himself and taught thousands of his fellow-men to know what the religion of Jesus Christ really means?—*Prof. C. T. Winchester, "Life of Wesley."*

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *GENERAL EXPOSITION (CONCLUDED).*

#### VII. CHRISTIAN OBLIGATIONS.

THE subjects which are formulated in our last three Articles were, at the time of the settling of the contents of the formulary, considered of secondary moment. But as time has gone by they have grown in outline until now they loom large against the early future. They do not, as our subtitle might at first suggest, indicate the whole round of Christian obligation, but those which grow out of the public relations of Christian men. In this, as in other parts of the Confession, the larger, or general, ideal is found containing and suggesting the lesser. The particular obligations treated of here are, first, those which grow out of our relations to the State—*i. e.*, our duties as citizens of the commonwealth; secondly, those which describe and define Christian stewardship, or the unselfish use of our personal possessions and accumulations of wealth; and, thirdly, the honor and reverence of a Christian man's word and the allowableness and sanctity of his legal oath.

It will be readily seen that these three statements cover the three great spheres of public action; or we may say they apply rules to the world of politics, to commerce and property rights, and to affairs juridical. These are realms into which the Church must more and more project itself, not by any asseveration of in-

quisitorial or administrative right, but in the shape of an idealized generation of citizenry, commercial and industrial leaders, and tribunes and administrators of law and justice. These things must flow legitimately from the life and testimony of the Church. No State can exist pure and free in administration that carries a corrupt dominant religious cult within it, *imperium in imperio*. Nor, conversely, can a State permanently, or for a long while, remain oppressive or corrupt in its administration with an enlightened form of faith and worship dominant within it. The law of like too certainly fulfills itself. Mediæval Romanism and present-day Protestantism illustrate both members of the corollary. Though we doubt the confessional pertinency of our Twenty-Third Article, its principle is yet such as the Church must emphasize in her pulpits, her literature, and the daily lives of her children. As for the social, political, and ethical teachings of the three Articles making up the section, they may well be accounted a prophetic girding of the Church for things which shall shortly come to pass.

The political trend in this country, both in our internal affairs and in our diplomatic relations, is such that early and radical changes are made possible. Transitions are following each other as rapidly as the going and coming of the equinoxes. The American immigration question has in it the potency of all past history; the foreign relations of our government are no more fraught with perils and possibilities of complications than are the conditions of our internal industrial and racial affairs. The plutocratic sentiment, too certainly dominant in commerce, has created a moral sense in many high places no less tenebrous and ob-

tuse than that of the lower criminal classes. Legislation is not an adequate remedy for these things. An active Christianity expressing itself through Churchly methods and organized ministries, always backed by a strong, a conscientious, a self-forsworn pulpit, is the remedy. The time is not distant, even now is, when these tenets or doctrines of the Confession are to be to the life of the nation as the horns of the altar.

### ARTICLE XXIII.

#### OF THE RULERS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

The President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, *as the delegates of the people*, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the Constitution of the United States, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States are a sovereign and independent nation, and ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

As was fully explained in a former section of this work, Mr. Wesley's recension of the Thirty-Nine Articles consisted of but twenty-four. The General Conference of the American Church, however, as a token of loyalty to the new government of the country, on adopting the Articles inserted this one. It may well be understood as occupying the place of the English Article, "Of Civil Magistrates," which Mr. Wesley eliminated for the good reason that its application was local to the Church and realm of England.

The Protestant Episcopal Church, organized a year later than the Methodist Church, also replaced this Article with one properly American, which reads as follows—viz.:



The power of the Civil Magistrates extendeth to all men, as well clergy as laity in all things temporal; but hath no authority in things purely spiritual. And we hold it to be the duty of all men who are professors of the gospel to pay respectful obedience to the civil authority, regularly and legitimately constituted.

When the organization of the undivided Methodist Episcopal Church extended itself into Canada, there began to be felt a necessity for the modification or substitution of this Article so as to meet the necessities of missions and the extensions of the Church into foreign countries. These necessities were finally met in a footnote appended to the Article. This note was formulated in 1820, and appears for the first time in the Discipline of that year. It has been left standing in the Discipline of the two American Churches from that time to the present. The footnote reads as follows:

As far as it respects civil affairs, we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and, therefore, it is expected that all our preachers and people will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The session of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, held in Birmingham, Ala., May, 1906, took the constitutional step looking toward a substitution of the matter of the footnote for the original Article. The improved text reads: "It is the duty of all Christians, and especially of Christian ministers, to observe and obey the laws and commands of the governing or supreme authority of the country of which they are citizens or in which they reside, and to use all laudable means to encourage and enjoin obedience to the powers that be."

The relation which should subsist between the Church and the civil authority of the country in which it exists has been a problem the most vexed and strife-producing of the Christian ages. Nothing now, however, seems more certainly settled than the separation of Church and State. Protestantism, whose immediate effect was to give birth not only to national but to provincial and even municipal Churches, independent in doctrine and administration, sounded the knell of "*establishments*" as an ecclesiastical rule. This separation of the things of Christ from the things of Cæsar is fundamental in the gospel which is the Church's great charter. For the first three hundred years of its life the Church was free from State entanglement. Indeed, its greatest enemy was the organized imperial government of Cæsar. It was a fateful, and seemed near proving, in the end, a fatal, hour when the Grecian Cæsar, Constantine, espoused its doctrines and became its defender. It has not yet outlived the consequences of that espousal, but is slowly *unliving* them. While these lines are being written the cable is flashing westward tidings of the finished legislation disestablishing the Papal Church by the last of the first-rate powers of the earth which have adhered to it. And simultaneously from England comes the word that the Liberal Parliament may at any moment move the disestablishment of the State Church along with abolition of the hereditary branch of the national legislature. Spain may be counted upon to follow the example of its Latin sister beyond the Pyrenees, and that within the next decade. The end of the mediæval system is in sight.

With the disappearance of the State Church comes

the strengthening of both Church and State and the growth of an enduring sympathy and coöperation between the two. There is no submission of the Church as an ideal, an embodiment of righteousness, to the State. The Church in the spiritual sense is subject to no power; but there is a proper political obedience of its members, "as well of clergy as of laity." The affairs of the two are entirely separate, but the Christian includes within his Christian citizenship the completeness of his civil obligation. His obedience to both is the obedience to truth only.

In this degree the tenet is but a reduction of the precept of Scripture to be subject to rulers, to judges, to magistrates, to the powers that be. It is, in fact, itself a precept and not a tenet in any technical sense, but it is none the less pertinent as a rule of Christian life.

#### ARTICLE XXIV.

##### OF CHRISTIAN MEN'S GOODS.

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor according to his ability.

The particular value of this Article has been anticipated. It grows not out of conditions in our own country only, but also out of the development of a world sentiment, malignly directed, as it appears, but concentrating upon a doctrine disallowed by the Article—namely, a community of goods. It may be—nay, it certainly is—true that every tendency in the direction of social concentration is not malign; but

there is that distinctive social heresy wearing the name of socialism which is malevolent, a mask of violence and lawless greed. It usually recruits itself from the ranks of responsible poverty, but its spirit is the same as lawless wealth. It is *lawless*, and therefore it is the enemy of State and Church alike. It is lawless, and therefore must be planned against by State and Church. The State will plan and execute in such way as it will; but the Church knows no methods, no law, except those derived from the source of incontrovertible authority, the Written Word. The Church must make the conscience of the State, which in its turn must make laws for the government of turbulent and lawless minorities. In this way only is the Church the ruler of nations.

“The riches and goods of Christian men are not common.” An apostolic expedient for a time, both formative and experimental, has often been pleaded as a permanent rule. Expedient that it was, it seemed to have outlived its usefulness even under apostolic direction. It was terminated without explanation or commendatory reflection. Individuality is the fixed and fundamental fact of life, and ramifies all the relations of being; it will doubtless be emphasized in the future State. To destroy it is to destroy the intellectual and social order. A man’s justly acquired goods are the accidents of his individuality. They cannot healthily be alienated to another without proper and legal recognition of that individuality. Some right, claim, or sentimental reason properly related to that individuality must account for the transfer. This is a law of nature, of the social order, and moreover

one imbedded in the divine code itself—namely: “Thou shalt not covet.”

The integrity of fundamental doctrine has been tested and settled. The Catholic creed of the Godhead, of Christ, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the Judgment for a life to come, has gone into the fundamentals; but the doctrines of the social order are yet to be settled. It is of providence that the spiritual were the first to be established. When the Church writes a new symbol, there will be in it a preponderance of social tenets, for the things spiritual will no longer be in dispute. He who can write a “statement” for the new social faith to be perfected in the teachings of the Church will find his final session amid the seats of the immortal. Let him write quickly.

2. “As touching right, title, and possession.” The Church can never lose by standing with law. She is the promoter and guardian of it. Lawful title is the guarantee of an order which is that condition of society in which the Church can do its best work. It can carry to its heathen converts no largess of social things surpassing these precepts. It can write nothing in its way of greater value for its missionary work. The honesty which is weak in its interpretations of property title is weak everywhere. Theft is simply a denial of this title.

3. “Every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor.” Here is the stewardship of wealth—of all possession, in fact. The rule may seem a narrow and particular one: “Give alms.” It is not; it is the rule already noted—the greater contains the lesser. This is Christian benev-

olence. The incentive to all true giving is a desire to supply the lack of others. "Distribute," "communicate"—these are the standards for giving. Not an equalization of money, but an equalization of benefits is the purpose of giving. If the money of the world were once equally distributed, it would soon be redistributed in an unequal way. Some, therefore, must be stewards of the whole, that the benefits may accrue to all. This the Church teaches and must teach.

4. "According to his ability." The rule is not that a man should strip his business of its capital, for then would chaos of industry and commerce follow; but he is to give as he is prospered of Heaven, as his ability increases.

## ARTICLE XXV

### OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH.

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle; so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

The teachings of this Article are so self-evident that little need be said by way of exposition. Yet as self-evident as is its meaning, it may be well to call attention to its chief use. It points a judgment against two of the most certain and terrible evils of all times—namely, profane and blasphemous swearing and perjury of oath.

1. "Vain and rash swearing." This precept is worth tomes of discursive theology. The evil proscribed is the canker of civilization. The divine inhi-

bition is in the Decalogue. That inhibition becomes a spirit wielding the lightning brand of "God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." A general judgment on the subject is to the effect that profane swearing is on the decrease in our day. If so, it is a testimony to the witness of the Church which has persisted in such precepts as these. Let them stand.

2. "But a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, so it be done in justice, judgment, and truth." The purification of public oath is the first step toward the redemption of society. This precept covers every oath of the man and citizen, from that administered by the petty justice to that taken in the highest office of national trust. When men come to swear justly and to maintain their oath to the uttermost, then will the people be delivered into a true freedom and the nation do exploits. The Church is a witness until this be brought to pass.

# METHODISM AND CALVINISM



Sin is the deliberate and willful act of a free agent who sees the better and chooses the worse, and thereby acts injuriously to himself and others. The root sin is selfishness, whereby needless trouble and pain are inflicted on others. When fully developed, it involves moral suicide.—*Sir Oliver Lodge.*

We do not wish to lessen any particular Church, or exalt our own at the expense of any other. But we do wish—we do long—to see every Church cast away from her, as the poison of death, all that is false in her dogmas, in order that she may preserve all that is true.—*Albert Taylor Bledsoe.*

The Christian religion—everything connected with it—is in so eminent a degree a matter of history that one cannot take up any definite standpoint of dogmatic questions without forming a judgment in reference to the history of dogma. Indeed, we may add that what is to gain lasting position in that sphere must be able to give a satisfactory account of its relations to the past.—*Kaftan.*

## CHAPTER XIV

### *METHODISM AND CALVINISM.*

THE oft-repeated modern-day charge that the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Confession are Calvinistic, and that the remains of original Calvinism are traceable in the Twenty-Five Articles, demands attention before we leave off these studies. A general answer thereto will make a fitting close for our task. I am indeed under specific promise to record such an answer and to set down other results of my inquiries directly bearing upon this matter.

There is no Calvinism in the Twenty-Five Articles; nor were their antecedents, the Thirty-Nine Articles, shaped under any influence that can be historically traced to the school of Calvin. Elsewhere the admission that the Anglican formulary carries a modicum of Augustinian doctrine is frankly made. This Augustinianism, the extent of which we purpose to define, has been mistaken for, and confounded with, Calvinism. So astute and careful a writer as Dr. A. T. Bledsoe refers to Cranmer as "a Calvinist." But the great critic was then discussing the principal doctrine of Augustine (original sin), and the statement was made with reference to the pending controversy, and with an unexpressed qualification that he no doubt expected would be understood. Certainly the author of "Theodicy" would not have undertaken to establish the literal truth of his own declaration. As easily

could he have established it as a fact that Wesley got his inspiration and doctrinal ideals from Whitefield and the Welsh Methodists, who, despite their difference from him, had much in common with him. But this point we will make clear in its proper connection.

The method of treating this question will be as follows: First, I shall examine and answer the charge of Calvinistic teaching made against the English Articles; and, secondly, I shall show that whatever of Augustinianism was originally in these Articles was eliminated in the Wesleyan recension. To these observations I shall add some others on the present state of Calvinistic theology in this country. We shall then see how Calvinism has been modified by Methodist Arminianism, and how its supplemental statements, forms of concord, and the like are an unconscious gravitation toward the contents of the Twenty-Five Articles and the unformulated Methodist doctrines of experience.

During the first four hundred years of the Church's life the catholic doctrines—that is, the doctrines of the Godhead, the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—were fought through bitter controversies and settled immutably. But in the fifth century, as the result of an exigency of the Pelagian controversy, Augustine attempted to formulate the doctrines of anthropology and objective soteriology. In doing so he raised certain issues concerning sin, free will, and the secret decrees of Jehovah that are unsettled to-day, after a lapse of fifteen centuries, though a settlement is at last in sight. The two principal tenets of Augustine were, first, the imputation to every man, as born into the world, of a measure of personal guilt

through Adamic or original sin; and, secondly, the particular election of men to salvation through an unconditional divine decree. Neither of these dogmas is supported, except by the vaguest inferences or strained constructions, in the writings of the Fathers of the Church previous to Augustine. Nobody nowadays dreams that they have any support in Scripture. Nevertheless, immediately after Augustine the whole Western Church fell into his train and thought only with him up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Arminianism emerged as a restoration of the doctrine of Scripture and the teaching of the early Church Fathers. It must be noted, however, that Melancthon, the greatest scholar and most correct thinker of the Reformation period, worked himself entirely out of the Augustinian dogma of predestination long before Arminius, but these views came after the German formularies had been written. Hence they got no setting, except as it is claimed in the mild Augustinianism of the Seventeenth English Article, an historical hypothesis to which attention will be given later.

Although Calvinism, a system of dogmatic theology formulated by John Calvin about the middle of the sixteenth century, is in part a result of Augustinianism, the two are materially dissimilar, and particularly so at the point of supreme test—namely, the doctrine of predestination. Augustine, at first, taught that predestination and election were no more than a confirmation by divine decree from eternity of all those who should freely believe on Christ,<sup>1</sup> which must be

---

<sup>1</sup>"Exposition Epistle to Romans," Vol. III., Part II., p. 716.

very near the Pauline doctrine: "Whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son."<sup>2</sup> But being pressed by Pelagius in the controversy, Augustine finally took up a position in the dogma of particular, unconditional election. This view was adopted as an answer to the Pelagian doctrine of free will. Augustine never taught the complementing doctrine of the Calvinistic system—namely, the reprobation of the nonelect. When in the ninth century Gottschalk announced the doctrine of reprobation and claimed support in the writings of Augustine, there was a furore in Europe. The provincial councils condemned him, and he died in prison as a heretic. But reprobation became the chief tenet in the system of Calvin, and was by him recognized as the means by which Jehovah augmented his glory.

St. Augustine was the most honored of all the Church Fathers by the Reformers. The Protestant leaders of Germany, Switzerland, and England vied with one another to do reverence to his teachings, and set him up as the patron and justifier of their departures. His influence was all but supreme in England, though it was the spirit rather than the letter of his doctrines which was received. All the conservative English Church historians show that it was the earlier rather than the latter views of this "ancient clerk," as Hardwick styles him, on the dogma of predestination that prevailed in the time of Henry and Edward. It appears to me to be beyond doubt that this was Cranmer's view. The internal evidence furnished by the Seventeenth English Article and the testimony of

---

<sup>2</sup>Romans viii. 29.

Burnet, Laurence, Brown, Hardwick, and others converge on the affirmative of this point. The historians agree that the Article is the sole record of the great Primate's opinion on a subject which shook England with controversy and civil war for a century afterwards.

That Cranmer could have been a Calvinist is a supposition which is rendered impossible, as we think, by the facts of chronology. The date of publication of Calvin's work on "Predestination" is fixed as late as the year 1552,<sup>3</sup> the very year in which the Edwardine Articles were finished. Although Calvin's name and works were not then unknown in England, his influence was not appreciable; and we have seen that the whole mind of the English Church, with that of the sovereign, had turned toward Germany for a confession of faith. The Calvinistic era in England began a dozen to twenty years later, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, on the return of the Marian exiles from Geneva, where a host of fugitive divines and lay people had imbibed the "comfortable" doctrines of the decrees. But the Anglican Articles were already written, and Cranmer had long before suffered the fires of martyrdom. The Edwardine Article on "Predestination" in passing into the Elizabethan Confession was not altered except in a word or two, and that alteration was to soften its Augustinianism.<sup>4</sup>

I may now submit the direct testimony of the witnesses on this point. To the claim that the teachings of Augustine and Calvin were identical on the subject

---

<sup>3</sup>See both Hardwick's and Brown's works on the Articles.

<sup>4</sup>See Hardwick, page 164.

of predestination Hardwick says: "This identity will no longer be maintained by any one who makes himself familiar with the systems of theology as fabricated in the schools of Hippo and Geneva, for, as extensively as Calvinists have been indebted to their African predecessor, they have so exaggerated various portions of his teachings and have so curtailed and contradicted others that, in spite of similarity of language, a profound, if not a fundamental, change is frequently observable on comparing the positions of the ancient and the modern doctor."<sup>5</sup> Nor is the judgment of Bishop Browne less directly expressed, nor less confirmatory. He says: "Advancing beyond the principles of his great master, Augustine, Calvin not only taught that all the elect are saved by immutable decrees, but that the reprobate are damned by a like irreversible sentence." This is Calvinism, which may be verified by a reference to Calvin's "Institutes;"<sup>6</sup> but it is not Augustinianism, neither is it the teaching of the Seventeenth Article of the Anglican Confession, as may be seen by a reference to its text.<sup>7</sup>

A study of this Article shows three things—viz.: First, an utter absence of reference to the doctrine of reprobation (it deals wholly with the effectual calling of those "who be justified freely and are made sons of God by adoption"); secondly, the complete absence of reference to "final perseverance" (rather "the mortifying of the works of the flesh" is set up as a sign of election); and, thirdly, a caution is issued to "curious and carnal persons" not to presume on any sentence or decree of foreordination. It is not surprising that

---

<sup>5</sup>Hardwick, page 261. <sup>6</sup>III., 21, p. 6. <sup>7</sup>See Appendix I.

there has always been in the English Church a strong dissent from the view that this Article teaches Calvinism. It is not to be wondered at that some have even denied that it is Augustinian in any radical sense. From the beginning a strong party has claimed it as Arminian.<sup>8</sup> Bishop Burnet was of this number. If one could read the Article with the garish light of Calvinism shut out from his mind, he might not find his judgment setting a great stretch between it and the Pauline teaching.

The theological status of the English Article will be more apparent if we institute a sharp comparison between the teachings of Calvinism and Arminianism made in the technical terms of the two schools thus:

1. *Calvinism*.—The doctrine of Calvin and the Calvinists is, that from all eternity God predestinated a certain fixed number of individuals, irrespective of anything in them, to final salvation and glory; and that all others are either predestined to damnation, or, at least, so left out of God's decree to glory that they must inevitably perish.

2. *Arminianism*.—The doctrine of Arminius and the Arminians is, that from all eternity God predestinated a certain fixed number of individuals to glory; but that this decree was not arbitrary, but in consequence of God's foreknowledge that those so predestinated would make a good use of the grace given; and that as God necessarily foresees all things, so foreseeing the faith of individuals, he hath in strait justice ordered his decree accordingly.

With which of these does the Seventeenth Article of the Anglican Confession most nearly agree? With neither absolutely, but it has a most wholesome "leaning" toward the latter.

---

<sup>8</sup>Brown, p. 420.



The "Five Points of Calvinism," as they are called, are stated as follows—viz.:

1. Predestination, or election to life eternal, and reprobation, or predestination to damnation.
2. Particular redemption—that is, the doctrine that Christ died only for a chosen few.
3. Original sin—that is, hereditary personal guilt entailed from Adam's transgression.
4. Irresistible grace, or effectual calling; the opposite of free will.
5. Final perseverance of the elect.

In how many "points" does the English Article agree with this syllabus? In none, though it adopts, in part, the terminology of at least one of them. The "Five Points" of Arminianism are simply a negating of each and all of these in their order, though there is a terminology common to both systems. They are the restoration of the scriptural teaching in language both simple and direct. The reader may judge by what right a vast majority of the English divines to-day claim, under these Articles, to be Arminians. The efforts of the Calvinistic party in the Church of England to establish in the time of Elizabeth those strong Calvinistic tenets, the Lambeth Articles, showed that their claim of the Seventeenth Article was not satisfactory. The Article says nothing about the cause of predestination, and that is fatal to the Calvinistic claim; and Bishop Brown well observes that the latter clauses of the Article seem purposely written to guard against Calvinistic errors. The English Reformers up to the time of Mary had not been mixed up with the Swiss controversies. Hooper, who was one of Cranmer's ad-

visers about this time,<sup>9</sup> wrote of his displeasure at certain of Calvin's utterances. An evidence complete in its nature and application that the English Confessors did not hold Calvinistic views is found in the Articles themselves. The Thirty-First Article (Twentieth of our Confession) declares that Christ was made "a propitiation and satisfaction for *all the sins of the whole world.*"

Bishop Brown even hints that the English Article was drawn up in collaboration with Melancthon, and quotes Archbishop Laurence as authority for the statement that only the death of Edward put an end to a scheme to install Melancthon as a teacher of divinity at Oxford. If this be true (and there is no good reason for doubting it), the potency of the English Article is many degrees removed from Calvinism.

Passing from Cranmer and the Edwardine Articles to Archbishop Parker and the Elizabethan Articles, we find no difficulties in the way. The Articles as revised by Parker have less Augustinianism in them than had their originals. The Marian refugees hoped to Calvinize both the Church and its Confession, but their efforts were fruitless so far as the Confession went. Parker, Guest, and Alley, who had never crossed the seas, stood firmly against admitting the "comfortable" decrees, and so preserved to England and the world the Arminian potency of the Articles written by Cranmer and his associates.

---

<sup>9</sup>Hooper had been a refugee from "The Bloody Statutes of the Six Articles" of Henry, but had returned from Zurich. He sympathized with Beza, and, though sometimes disagreeing with Cranmer, followed him loyally in building up the Reformation. He suffered martyrdom under Mary.

I have now traversed as thoroughly as my scheme requires the theological history of the English Article on "Predestination." My next step will be to show how the Wesleyan recension eliminated Augustinianism from the Confession.

Lutheranism and Anglicanism are essentially Arminian; that is to say, the principles on which they protested against Rome are grounded in the doctrines of free grace and the freedom of human choice. The "Reformed" Churches as a buffer between Lutheranism and Anglicanism on the one hand, and Rome on the other, fell upon the logical system of Calvinism (logical after its false premise) as a scholastic answer to Rome, herself the product of scholasticism. But the Reformation and Arminianism were not synchronous in history. Formulated Arminianism followed in the century after the birth of the Reformation. Logically enough Arminianism sprang out of the rankest soil of Calvinism, Arminius having been a pupil of Beza, the successor of Calvin. It is interesting in this connection to recall that St. Ambrose, the spiritual father of Augustine, is reckoned to be the last great *Arminian* amongst the early Western Fathers. Thus did history reverse the order of master and pupil at the beginning and end of its cycle.

The two main points of Augustine's system—namely, original sin, or hereditary guilt, and predestination—are represented in both the Augsburg and the Anglican Confessions. The Augsburg Article on original sin is strongly Augustinian; the English Article is not so decidedly so. The Augsburg formulary does not treat predestination in a separate tenet, but the English formulary does, in the spirit we have already noted.

There are incidental developments of Augustinianism in other of the English Articles, but the two mentioned carry the burden of it. It will now be easy to show how the Wesleyan scalpel pared away these scholastic elements and left the Articles accordant at every point with Scripture and Arminianism, and constituting, as Dr. Bledsoe says, "the most perfect Confession under the sun."

For the text of the English Article (XVII.) on "Predestination," we refer the reader to Appendix I. of this work, where there is a comparison of the original Thirty-Nine Articles with the recension of Mr. Wesley. We also cite to this exhibit for a closer scrutiny of those Articles which, though retained in our Confession, have had their Augustinian elements eliminated. The Article on original sin is the one which most completely illustrates the spirit of this recension. The section retained by Mr. Wesley is distinctly Arminian—not indeed in its title, which is a matter of conventional definition explained elsewhere;<sup>10</sup> but in the language of the Article as expurgated. The original Article says that "in every person born into the world it [original sin] deserveth God's wrath and condemnation." *That is Augustinian.* The Wesleyan Article says only that original sin "is the corruption of every man's nature whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness," etc. *That is Arminian.* The original Article declares that to be *sin* which every man has innocently and of necessity inherited. The Wesleyan Article eliminates this teaching,

---

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Article VII., page 156.

and throws the believer back on the New Testament for enlightenment.

The Thirteenth English Article, "Of Works Done before Justification," is Augustinian, and is another device of necessity against Pelagianism. Its doctrine that any good work done before justification "is displeasing to God" is utterly scholastic, unprofitable, and untrue. It has no place with us, having been cut off entirely by Mr. Wesley. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration taught in the Twenty-Seventh English Article, but entirely eliminated from that Article as it appears in our Confession, is not distinctively Augustinian, but may be so classed, since it is necessary to the completeness of that system, the sign of the elect being the rite of baptism. The English Article says: "As by an instrument they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church." This doctrine, with what goes with it, is rejected in the Wesleyan formulary.

The only other Article of our Confession that might seem to be open to the charge of Calvinism or Augustinianism is the Second Article in the declaration that Christ was made a sacrifice "not only for *original guilt* but also for the actual sins of men." The term "original guilt," which might more properly be "original sin," is used here in the same sense in which the heading of Article Seven is retained. It is descriptive of a thing the nature of which is historically in dispute. In the Article there is no declaration that original guilt is imputed to men, but the remedy for sin, both as a principle and an act, is described. The theory of the need and the doctrine remedial are wholly Arminian.

We have thus briefly examined the doctrines of Ar-

minianism and Calvinism. The great historic exponent of Arminian doctrines is Methodism. The Methodist thought of to-day describes the most perfect type of Arminian interpretation the world has yet had. In this it approaches the simplicity of apostolic teaching. This Arminianism is not written down in any dogmatic statement, but lives in Christian experience and takes shape in current interpretations. It is making the world free.

But as for Calvinism, there is probably not a Calvinistic body on earth that any more believes it as a system. Perhaps there is not an enlightened Calvinist that believes a single one of its chief tenets throughout. If he exists and could be produced, he would be the Neanderthal man of theology. Calvinism is no more preached. With the creeds and confessions that embody it, it has become a reminiscence.

Whither are the Calvinistic Churches drifting in their theology? Toward Arminianism. What Arminianism? That contained in the Twenty-Five Articles and expounded in the experience and current teachings of Methodism. This drift is an unconscious one, but is natural and logical; it is of the essence and spirit of religious sincerity. The Calvinistic Churches have been for two hundred years describing an evolution which Arminius and the Remonstrants accomplished *per saltum*, and which the Wesleyan Churches have inherited as the best of all things Anglican.

It is a large claim to make, but it is historically a true one, that Methodism has been the theological savor of Protestantism. That does not detract from the value of the historical testimony, spiritual vitality, or ministry of the other great bodies of Protestantism.

Some of these in particular services have gone far beyond Methodism. Especially in a certain mastery of Christian thought and interpretation the Churches of Scotland and the Continent of Europe have laid all the remainder of Protestantism under debts of obligation. But in the matter of holding in ultimate embodiment the key doctrines of the evangel history daily shows that the trust confided to Methodism has been peculiar. Not only in the substance of these doctrines but also in the manner of their statement has the residuum of the Reformation been found. If Methodism had gone out with other than a historic Confession—in other words, if it had been betrayed into dogmatically stating its doctrines of experience instead of leaving them in their natural and plastic state—it had failed to fulfill its destiny. To have dogmatized with these doctrines had been to challenge Methodism's theological antipodes, while by leaving them in the homiletical shape in which they were first uttered the Christian world has been attracted to that way of believing.

"The Five Points of Calvinism" have vanished from men's minds. With all things scholastic, they faded into the mists of dreams. The old Remonstrance stands in history; a new one would be as irrelevant as a second Magna Charta or a new Declaration of Independence. Time was when Methodism might with some show of logic or precedent have made a dogmatic stand on these quinquarticular "points;" but that time was past a generation and more ago. Our ancestors were tempted herein, but did not yield. Methodism has fought and won its fight under a historic Confession. It may well be content to continue to display this ensign of heraldry.

Every step taken by the Calvinistic Churches of this country during the past half century has been a step toward the adoption of Arminian interpretations. A concrete example was the adoption by the Presbyterian Church, near the beginning of the last century, of the evangelistic methods of Methodism, which resulted almost immediately in a doctrinal departure in the shape of the formulary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which formulary rejected four of the five "points" of Calvinism. But it is the action taken in very recent years by the most powerful Presbyterian body in this country which furnishes more directly the point of illustration which I seek.

"The Brief Statement of the Reformed Faith," published by authority of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and described as having been done "for a better understanding of our doctrinal beliefs," is not a Confession. It is not even, by the token of its own title, an addendum to the Confession, though it has been cited as a precedent for confessional movements amongst other Christians. It is, at most, "a form of concord," a feeling out into theological space for a more certain path in which to walk. There is in it both a centripetal and a centrifugal force, the one of sentiment, the other of logic—the logic of necessity as well as faith. This "statement" is creditable to the great body which wrote it, though it falls short of the ultimate need. It is but a vehicle of transition, and as such has a value. The Presbyterian Church is where it must needs "write," and that "quickly." It is afield theologically, and in the places of tombs. It is a great and vital spiritual body. It must and will find its way. A belated crux



is upon it, an intellectual revolution has overtaken its theology. Methodism has no such need; it is fulfilling its destiny. The Presbyterian "Brief Statement" is Arminian in spirit. As such the semi-Arminian Cumberland Presbyterian body has been, in part at least, willing to accept it as a writing of concord. So stands to-day the cause of the "Five Points."

## APPENDICES.



## APPENDIX I.

THE Thirty-Nine Anglican Articles, showing the Wesleyan Recension from which resulted the Twenty-Five Articles of Methodism, with subsequent verbal variations.\*

### ARTICLES OF RELIGION.†

#### I. *Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.*

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without ["body, parts, or passions," ch. by W. to "body or parts"]; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things [in. 1820: both] visible and invisible. And in unity of this godhead, there ["be" ch. by W. to "are"] three persons of one substance, power, and eternity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

#### II. *Of the Word, or Son of God, ["which" ch. by W. to "who"] was made very Man.*

The Son, ["which" ch. by W. to "who"] is the Word of the Father, [om. 1786: begotten from everlasting of the Father], the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; [om. by W.: of her substance] so that two whole and perfect natures—that is to say, the Godhead and manhood—were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

---

\* This comparison is, by courtesy of Messrs. Smith & Lamar, Publishing Agents, taken from "The History of the Revisions of the Discipline," by Rev. P. A. Peterson, D.D.

† The changes and omissions made by Mr. Wesley are indicated by the letter W. in brackets and on the right hand of the page. Changes made subsequently are put in brackets, with the dates.

(III.) *Of the Going Down of Christ into Hell.* [Om. by W.]

As Christ died for us and was buried, so also is it to be believed that he went down into hell.

III. (IV.) *Of the Resurrection of Christ.*

Christ did truly rise again from ["death" ch. by W. to "the dead"], and took again his body, with [om. by W.: flesh, bones, and] all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

IV. (V.) *Of the Holy Ghost.*

The Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

V (VI.) *Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*

["Holy Scripture containeth" ch. 1816 to "The Holy Scriptures contain"] all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein ["nor" ch. by W. to "or," ch. 1808 to "nor"] may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of [om. 1789: the] faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy ["Scripture" ch. 1816 to "Scriptures"], we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

[Om. 1790: Of] *The Names* [om. by W.: and number] *of the Canonical Books.*

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, ["The First Book of Esdras, The Second Book of Esdras," ch. by W. to "The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah"], The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, Cantica, or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the Greater, Twelve Prophets the Less.

All the other books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth [Om. by W. read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine. Such are the following:

The Third Book of Esdras, The Fourth Book of Esdras, The Book of Tobias, The Book of Judith, The Rest of The Book of Esther, The Book of Wisdom, Jesus the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, The Song of the Three Children, The Story of Susanna, Of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, The First Book of Maccabees, The Second Book of Maccabees.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account [om. by W.: them] canonical.

VI. (VII.) *Of the Old Testament.*

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the

Old and New ["Testament" ch. 1882 to "Testaments"] everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard ["which" ch. by **W.** to "who"] feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites\* ["do" ch. by **W.** to "doth"] not bind ["Christian men" ch. by **W.** to "Christians"], nor ["the civil precepts thereof ought" ch. by **W.** to "ought the civil precepts thereof"] of necessity [om. 1812, re-in. 1870: to] be received in any Commonwealth; yet, notwithstanding, no Christian [om. by **W.**; man] whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

(VIII.) *Of the Three Creeds.*

[Om. by **W.**

The three Creeds—Nicene Creed, Athanasius' Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed—ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

VII. (IX.) *Of Original or Birth Sin.*

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the [om. by **W.**; fault and] corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and [om. by **W.**; is] of his own nature inclined to evil [om. by **W.**; so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit], [in. by **W.**; and that continually].

And therefore in every person born into this world, it de- [Om. by **W.** serveth God's wrath and condemnation. And this infection of nature doth remain; yea, in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek, *Φρόνημα σαρκός*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin.

VIII. (X.) *Of Free Will.*

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and [om. by **W.**; good] works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

IX. (XI.) *Of the Justification of Man.*

We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our own works or deservings: wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort [om. by **W.**; as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification].

---

\* Misprinted in the Discipline, "*rights*," until 1836.

X. (XII.) *Of Good Works.*

["Albeit that" ch. by W. to "Although"] good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and [om. by W.: do] spring out [om. by W.: necessarily] of a true and lively faith, inso-much that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree [in. 1812: is] discerned by ["the" ch. by W. to "its"] fruit.

(XIII.) *Of Works before Justification.* [Om. by W.]

Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say), deserve grace of congruity; yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.

XI. (XIV.) *Of Works of Supererogation.*

Voluntary works, besides over and above God's commandments, which ["they call" ch. 1816 to "are called"] works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare that they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that ["are" ch. by W. to "is"] commanded [om. by W.: to] you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

(XV.) *Of Christ Alone without Sin.* [Om. by W.]

Christ in the truth of our nature was made like unto us in all things, sin only except, from which he was clearly void, both in his flesh and in his spirit. He came to be the Lamb without spot, who, by sacrifice of himself once made, should take away the sins of the world; and sin, as St. John saith, was not in him. But all the rest, although baptized, and born again in Christ, yet offend in many things; and if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

XII. (XVI.) *Of Sin after* ["Baptism" ch. by W. to "Justification"].

Not every [om. by W.: deadly] sin willingly committed after ["baptism is" ch. by W. to "justification is the"] sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore, the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after ["baptism" ch. by W. to "justification"]: after we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God ["we may arise" ch. by W. to "rise"] again and amend our lives. And, therefore, they are to be condemned ["which" ch. by W. to "who"] say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

(XVII.) *Of Predestination and Election.* [Om. by W.]

Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby (before the foundations of the world were laid) he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he

hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by his Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling. they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of his only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and, at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.

As the godly consideration of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comfort to godly persons, and such as feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh and their earthly members, and drawing up their mind to high and heavenly things; as well because it doth greatly establish and confirm their faith of eternal salvation, to be enjoyed through Christ, as because it doth fervently kindle their love towards God: so for curious and carnal persons, lacking the Spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall, whereby the devil doth thrust them either into desperation, or into wretchlessness of most unclean living, no less perilous than desperation.

Furthermore, we must receive God's promises in such wise as they be generally set forth to us in Holy Scripture: and in our doings that will of God is to be followed which we have expressly declared unto us in the word of God.

*(XVIII.) Of Obtaining Eternal Salvation Only by the Name of Christ.*

They also are to be had accursed that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved.

*XIII. (XIX.) Of the Church.*

The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in [om. 1786: the] which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments [om. by W.: be] duly ["ministered" ch. by W. to "administered"], according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

As the Church of Hierusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch [Om. by W. have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.

*(XX.) Of the Authority of the Church.*

The Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith; and yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's word written; neither may it expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of holy writ, yet as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so, besides the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation.

*(XXI.) Of the Authority of General Councils.*

General Councils may not be gathered together without the commandment and will of princes. And when they be gathered together (forasmuch as they be an assembly of men, whereof all be not governed with the Spirit and word of God), they may err, and sometimes have erred, even in things pertaining unto God. Wherefore things ordained by them as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they be taken out of Holy Scripture.



XIV. (XXII.) *Of Purgatory.*

The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory ["pardons" ch. 1789 to "pardon," ch. 1870 to "pardons"], worshiping and adoration, as well of images as of relics, and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no ["warranty" ch. by W. to "warrant"] of Scripture, but [om. by W. : rather] repugnant to the word of God.

(XXIII.) *Of Ministering in the Congregation.* [Om. by W.]

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.

XV. (XXIV.) *Of Speaking in the Congregation in Such a Tongue as the People Understand.*

It is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the Primitive Church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not ["understood of" ch. by W. to "understood by"] the people.

XVI. (XXV.) *Of the Sacraments.*

Sacraments, ordained of Christ, ["be" ch. by W. to "are"] not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they ["be" ch. by W. to "are"] certain [om. by W. : sure witnesses and effectual] signs of grace and God's good-will ["towards" ch., by W. to "toward"] us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

There are two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel—that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five, commonly called sacraments—that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction—are not to be counted for sacraments of the gospel, being such as have ["grown partly" ch. 1786 to "partly grown"] out of the *corrupt* following of the apostles, [in. 1786: and] partly are states of life allowed ["by" ch. by W. to "in"] the Scriptures, but yet have not [in. by W. : the] like nature of [om. by W. : sacraments with] Baptism and the Lord's Supper, ["for that" ch. by W. to "because"] they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about, but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily purchase to themselves ["damnation" ch. by W. to "condemnation"] as St. Paul saith, [in. 1816: 1 Cor. xi. 29].

(XXVI.) *Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, Which Hinders Not the Effect of the Sacrament.* [Om. by W.]

Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments: yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by his commission and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the word of God and in the receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered unto them, which be effectual because of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men.

Nevertheless, it appertaineth to the discipline of the Church that inquiry be made of evil ministers, and that they be accused by those that have knowledge of their offenses: and finally, being found guilty, by just judgment be deposed.

XVII. (XXVII.) *Of Baptism.*

Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby "[Christian men" ch. by W. to "Christians"] are ["discerned" ch. by W. to "distinguished"] from others that ["be" ch. by W. to "are"] not ["christened" ch. by W. to "baptized"], but it is also a sign of regeneration or [in. by W.: the] new birth [om. by W.: whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the Church: the promises of the forgiveness of sin, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed: faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God]. The baptism of young children is [om. by W.: in any wise] to be retained in the Church [om. by W.: as most agreeable with the institution of Christ].

XVIII. (XXVIII.) *Of the Lord's Supper.*

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love\* that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: inso-much that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of ["the" ch. 1796 to "our," ch. 1870 to "the"] Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual † manner. And the ["mean" ch. 1820 to "means"] whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten, in the Supper, is faith.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

\*The words "of the love" were by a misprint omitted in 1812, and were not restored until 1840.

† Was misprinted "scriptural" in 1808, and corrected in 1844.

(XXIX.) *Of the Wicked which Eat Not the Body of Christ in the Use of the Lord's Supper.* [Om. by W.]

The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth (as St. Augustine saith) the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign or sacrament of so great a thing.

XIX. (XXX.) *Of Both Kinds.*

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's ["sacrament" ch. by W. to "Supper"], by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be ["ministered" ch. 1791 to "administered"] to all ["Christian men" ch. by W. to "Christians"] alike.

XX. (XXXI.) *Of the One Oblation of Christ Finished upon the Cross.*

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in which it ["was" ch. by W. to "is"] commonly said that the priest ["did" ch. by W. to "doth"] offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, ["were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits" ch. by W. to "is a blasphemous fable and dangerous deceit"].

XXI. (XXXII.) *Of the Marriage of* ["Priests" ch. by W. to "Ministers"].

["Bishops, priests, and deacons" ch. by W. to "The ministers of Christ"] are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other ["Christian men" ch. by W. to "Christians"], to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve ["better" ch. by W. to "best"] to godliness.

(XXXIII.) *Of Excommunicate Persons, How They Are To Be Avoided.* [Om. by W.]

That person which, by open denunciation of the Church, is rightly cut off from the unity of the Church and excommunicated, ought to be taken of the whole multitude of the faithful as an heathen and publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and received into the Church by a judge that hath authority thereunto.

XXII. (XXXIV.) *Of the* ["Traditions of the Church" ch. by W. to "Rites and Ceremonies of Churches."]

It is not necessary that ["traditions and ceremonies be in all places one or utterly alike; for at all times they have been diverse" ch. by W. to "rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different"], and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word. Who-

soever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the ["traditions" ch. by W. to "rites"] and ceremonies of the Church [in. by W.: to which he belongs], which ["be" ch. by W. to "are"] repugnant to the word of God, and ["be" ch. by W. to "are"] ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as ["he" ch. by W. to "one"] that offendeth against the common order of the Church [om. by W.: and hurteth the authority of the magistrate] and woundeth the consciences of [om. by W.: the] weak brethren.

["Every particular or national Church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish ceremonies or rites of the Church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying" ch. by W. to "Every particular Church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification."]

(XXXV.) *Of the Homilies.*

[Om. by W.]

The second Book of Homilies, the several titles whereof we have joined under this article, doth contain a goodly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times, as doth the former Book of Homilies, which were set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and therefore we judge them to be read in Churches by the ministers diligently and distinctly, that they may be understood of the people.

OF THE NAMES OF THE HOMILIES.

1. Of the Right Use of the Church. 2. Against Peril of Idolatry. 3. Of Repairing and Keeping Clean of Churches. 4. Of Good Works: First of Fasting. 5. Against Gluttony and Drunkenness. 6. Against Excess of Apparel. 7. Of Prayer. 8. Of the Place and Time of Prayer. 9. That Common Prayers and Sacraments Ought to be Ministered in a Known Tongue. 10. Of the reverend Estimation of God's Word. 11. Of Alms-doing. 12. Of the Nativity of Christ. 13. Of the Passion of Christ. 14. Of the Resurrection of Christ. 15. Of the Worthy Receiving of the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ. 16. Of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. 17. For the Rogation-days. 18. Of the State of Matrimony. 19. Of Repentance. 20. Against Idleness. 21. Against Rebellion.

(XXXVI.) *Of Consecration of Bishops and Ministers.*

The Book of Consecration of Archbishops and Bishops, and ordering of Priests and Deacons, lately set forth in the time of Edward the Sixth, and confirmed at the same time by authority of Parliament, doth contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordering; neither hath it any thing that of itself is superstitious and ungodly. And, therefore, whosoever are consecrated or ordered according to the rites of that book, since the second year of the forenamed King Edward, unto this time or hereafter, shall be consecrated or ordered according to the same rites, we decree all such to be rightly, orderly, and lawfully consecrated and ordered.

(XXXVII.) *Of the Civil Magistrates.*

The king's majesty hath the chief power in this realm of England, and his other dominions, unto whom the chief government of all estates of this realm, whether they be ecclesiastical or civil, in all causes doth appertain, and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

Where we attribute to the king's majesty the chief government, by which titles we understand the minds of some slanderous folks to be offended; we give not to our princes the ministering either of God's word, or of the sacraments, to which things the injunctions also lately set forth by Elizabeth our queen do most plainly testify; but that only prerogative, which we see to have been given always to all godly princes in Holy

Scriptures by God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and degrees committed to this charge by God, whether they be ecclesiastical or temporal, and restrain with the civil sword the stubborn and evil doers.

The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this realm of England.

The laws of the realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offenses.

It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars.

### XXIII. *Of the Rulers of the United States of America.*

[In. 1790: The President,] the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the councils of state, as the delegates of the people, are the rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the ["general Act of Confederation" ch. 1804 to "Constitution of the United States"], and by the ["Constitutions" ch. 1854 to "Constitution"] of their respective States. And the said States [in. 1804: are a sovereign and independent nation, and] ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

1820.] *Note.*—As far as it respects civil affairs, we believe it the duty of Christians, and especially all Christian ministers, to be subject to the supreme authority of the country where they may reside, and to use all laudable means to enjoin obedience to the powers that be; and, therefore, it is expected that all our preachers and people who may be under ["the British or any other" ch. 1854 to "any foreign"] government, will behave themselves as peaceable and orderly subjects.\*

### XXIV.† (XXXVIII.) *Of Christian Men's Goods* [om. by W.; which are not common].

The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as ["certain Anabaptists" ch. by W. to "some"] do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor according to his ability.

### XXV.† (XXXIX.) *Of a Christian Man's Oath.*

As we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ and James his apostle, so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

---

\* This note was appended to this Article in 1820, and was designed for the express benefit of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Canada, which was then under the jurisdiction of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.

† These were respectively the XXIII<sup>d</sup> and XXIV<sup>th</sup> of the Articles prepared by Mr. Wesley.

## APPENDIX II.

Articles of Religion agreed upon for the Japanese Methodist Church by the Joint Commission at Buffalo, N. Y., July 18, 1906.

### 1. OF FAITH IN THE HOLY TRINITY.

There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

### 2. OF THE WORD, OR SON OF GOD, WHO WAS MADE VERY MAN.

The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures—that is to say, the Godhead and manhood—were joined together in one person, never to be divided; whereof is one Christ, very God and very Man, who suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

### 3. OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

Christ did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body with all things pertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into heaven and there reigneth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

### 4. OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

The Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

## 5. OF THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION.

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. By the Holy Scriptures we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

*The Names of the Canonical Books.*

Genesis,	The First Book of Chronicles,
Exodus,	The Second Book of Chronicles.
Leviticus,	The Book of Ezra,
Numbers,	The Book of Nehemiah,
Deuteronomy,	The Book of Esther,
Joshua,	The Book of Job,
Judges,	The Psalms,
Ruth,	The Proverbs,
The First Book of Samuel,	Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,
The Second Book of Samuel,	Cantica, or Songs of Solomon,
The First Book of Kings,	Four Prophets the Greater,
The Second Book of Kings,	Twelve Prophets the Less.

All the books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

## 6. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who teach that the fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; nevertheless, no Christian is free from the duty of obedience to the commandments which are called moral.

## 7. OF ORIGINAL SIN.

By the voluntary disobedience of our first parents the nature of man was corrupted, so that he is very far gone

from original righteousness, and continually inclined to evil. Wherefore he cannot turn and prepare himself by his natural strength and efforts to do good works acceptable to God.

#### 8. OF JUSTIFICATION AND GOOD WORKS.

We are accounted righteous before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not for our own works or deservings, but we are justified by faith in him. Nevertheless, good works, which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit, are pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ.

#### 9. OF SIN AFTER JUSTIFICATION.

Not every sin willingly committed after justification is the sin against the Holy Spirit, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification. After we have received the Holy Spirit it is possible to depart from grace given and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, through repentance and faith, to rise again and amend our lives. Nevertheless, the peril of sinning against the light we have received is exceeding great, because it leads to that hardness of heart for which there is no repentance; therefore we ought to watch continually unto prayer against all temptation, and the erroneous teaching of those who say they can no more sin as long as they live here.

#### 10. OF THE CHURCH.

The visible Church of Christ is a company of faithful people in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance; and whose mission it is to evangelize the world in obedience to our Lord's command to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

#### 11. OF PURGATORY AND OTHER ERRORS.

Certain well-known doctrines concerning purgatory, pardons, indulgences, images and other relics, the invocation of saints, and merit acquired by works of supererogation, by whomsoever taught, are not only without warrant of Scripture, but are repugnant to the Word of God,



## 12. OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian profession, but they are symbols of grace and of God's good will toward us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him. There are only two sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the gospel—that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a symbol of regeneration or the new birth. And inasmuch as our Saviour has said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," the baptism of young children is to be retained in the Church.

The Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but is also a memorial and a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is, as the apostle saith, a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is the partaking of the blood of Christ. But transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of our Lord, is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshiped.

The cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

## 13. OF THE ONE OBLATION OF CHRIST, FINISHED UPON THE CROSS.

The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a dangerous error.

## 14. OF THE MARRIAGE OF MINISTERS.

The ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to marry or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is

lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

#### 15. OF THE RITES AND CEREMONIES OF CHURCHES.

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same. As they have varied in the past, so they may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and customs, only so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. But no member, in the right of his private judgment, may violate the rites and ceremonies of the Church to which he belongs.

#### 16. OF THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

[The Joint Commission decided to leave the article on Civil Government to be prepared and adopted by the General Conference to be convened in Tokyo.]

#### 17. OF CHRISTIAN MEN'S GOODS.

The riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do erroneously teach. Yet every Christian should hold his possessions as a providential trust to be administered, as the Word of God and an enlightened conscience may direct, in promoting the welfare of his fellow-men and extending Christ's kingdom in the earth.

#### 18. OF A CHRISTIAN MAN'S OATH.

An oath in confirmation of testimony, when required by proper civil authority, is not to be refused by a Christian man, but is to be regarded as a solemn appeal to the Judge of all men as to the truth of the evidence given.



